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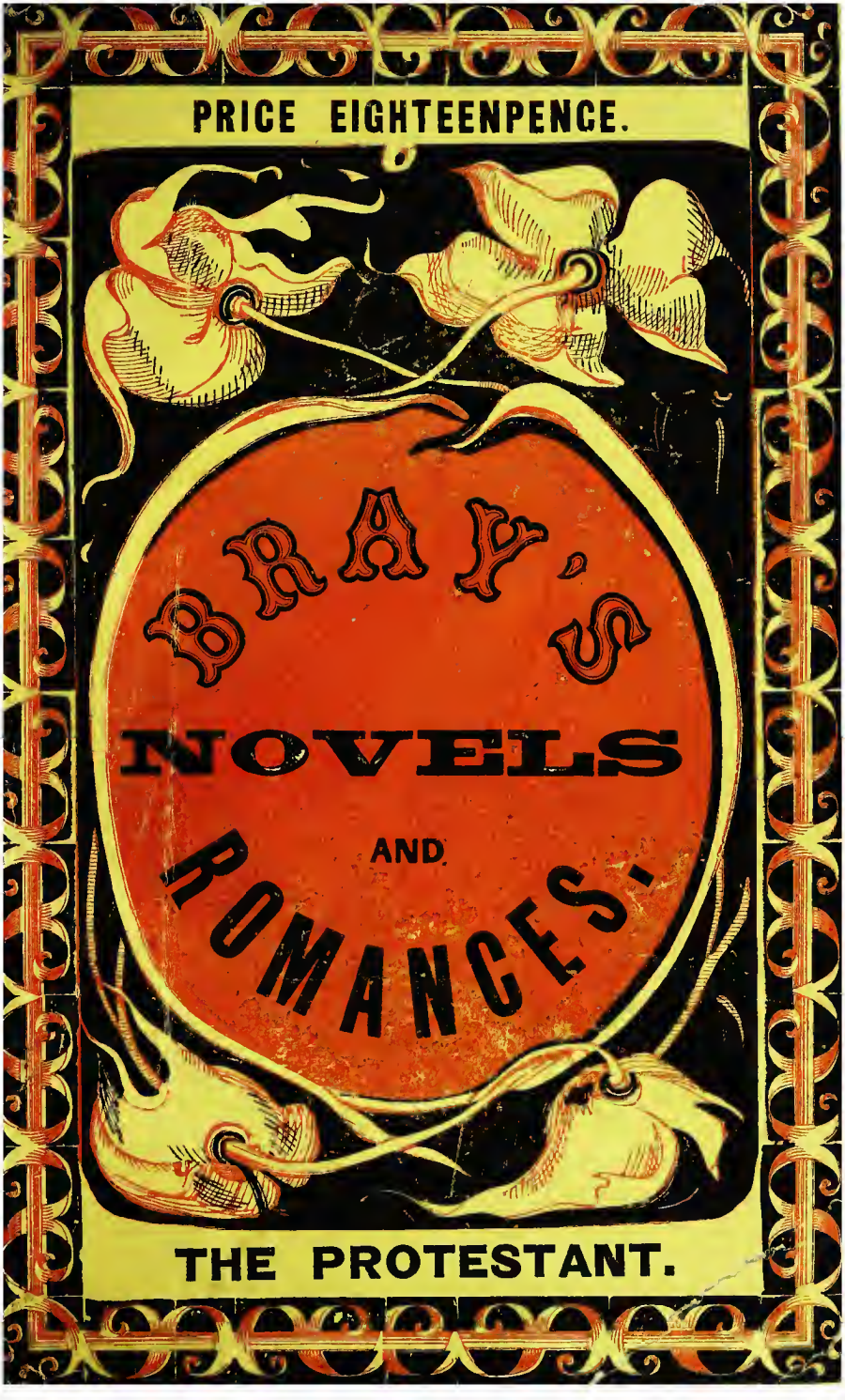

THE PROTESTANT.

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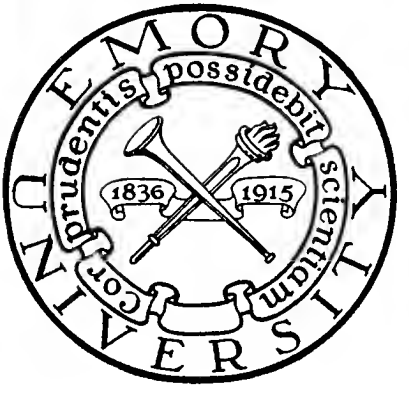

Mr. Belford parting from his wife and daughter.

London Published 1845 by Longman &c.

THE

NOVELS AND ROMANCES

OF

ANNA ELIZA BRAY

THE PROTESTANT

From a Sketch of C.A. Stothard F.S.A.

London Published 1845 by Longman Brown & Co

THE

PROTESTANT

A TALE OF

THE REIGN OF QUEEN MARY.

BY

MRS. BRAY

A NEW EDITION,
REVISED AND CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1845.

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Printed by Manning and Mason, Ivy Lane, St. Paul's.

TO

SIR ROBERT HARRY INGLIS, BARONET,

ETC. ETC. ETC.

My dear Sir Robert,

The favourable opinion with which our mutual and ever lamented friend, Mr. Southey, the Poet Laureate, honoured this, and some other productions of my pen—(one of which, indeed, he suggested to me*)—induces me to inscribe to you, 'The Protestant.' In an age when there are those who scruple not to say, that they would, if possible, unprotestantize the Church of England, to no one can a work, which advocates the great principles of the Reformation, be more appropriately dedicated than to yourself, who have so repeatedly and zealously stood forward in its defence.

I have the honour to remain,
My dear Sir Robert,
Very faithfully yours,

ANNA ELIZA BRAY.

The Vicarage, Tavistock,
June 24th, 1845.

* 'The Borders of the Tamar and the Tavy.'

[ERRATUM.—In the Dedication of Volume the Second, for "those of Herodotus" read "those of the Heroes of Herodotus," etc.]

THE PROTESTANT.

CHAPTER I.

NEAR the city of Canterbury, during the reign of Mary the First, queen of England, there stood a retired village, which we shall introduce to our readers by the name of Wellminster. It was situated in one of those richly wooded valleys so peculiar to the county of Kent, guarded by gently sloping hills, and watered by the river Stour. A church, erected in the early ages of Christianity, and said to have owed its foundation to Ethelbert, king of Kent, displayed the massive structure and the round-headed arch of the Saxon era. This church was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, as a spring of the purest water, that rose near the spot, was held by tradition to have been the font of baptism to many of the first converts who embraced the Gospel in our island. A few humble tenements, and a handsome stone-built house of the time of Henry the Seventh that stood within a pretty garden, formed the village. The whole was remarkable for nothing so much as the beauty of its situation; where woods and water, together with the fresh verdure of the fields, combined to form a scene of that happy and cultivated character so peculiar to England.

Such was Wellminster. But Time, that subdues empires as well as towns, whose touch withers alike the bloom of human beauty, and the pride of human art--Time has long since passed over it with a destroying hand, and the church, the village, are no more. So complete has been the ruin, that vainly would the traveller now seek to find even the smallest vestige of their former existence.

But though the works of man perish, his spirit is imperishable. And, hallowed by the memory of some great and honoured deed acted by that spirit, even a barren rock often

becomes more interesting to posterity by the association of kindred feelings, than a land glowing with beauty, unmarked, unendeared by moral sympathy.

During the reign of Edward the Sixth, Cranmer had placed in the hamlet of Wellminster a pastor of his own choice, Owen Wilford; a man who for some time had served him in the capacity of secretary, but who, devoted to literature and the quiet pursuits of a retired life, preferred the seclusion of a small country cure, to his office in Lambeth Palace, where he necessarily became engaged in affairs more immediately connected with the court. Owen was a zealous Reformer. He had resided in Germany during that eventful period when the followers of Luther devoted their lives, and all that they possessed, to the reformation of the church. He had been the author of some learned tracts in support of his opinions; and it was by these that he at first became known to Cranmer.

Owen Wilford was a married man. He had a son and daughter (now grown up); nor did he enter into holy orders till Edward the Sixth allowed the clergy to have wives. Soon after, as we have stated above, Cranmer placed him at Wellminster. As a pastor, he was eloquent and zealous in the pulpit; and in his life and conversation, honest and sincere; whilst a thousand acts of kindness and benevolence endeared him to his simple flock, who looked to him as to a common father.

His wife, whose character was in many respects similar to his own, was alike beloved by the villagers: so that, what with their instruction and example, there was not perhaps a happier, or a more virtuous, village in all England.

Cranmer, who really loved the pastor for the simplicity and excellence of his character, had been desirous to promote him in the church; but Owen declined this kind intention of his patron. Owen was indeed one of those rare men who love not this world's goods for their own sake. He was fast declining into the vale of years. Contented with a sufficiency, and endeared to his parishioners, he did not wish for a change, especially as he considered that his children would be well provided for, his son Edward (now grown to man's estate, and travelling in foreign parts), being the sole heir to his maternal uncle, a person of considerable opulence. For his children, therefore, he wanted nothing; and for himself he had enough, for his necessary wants and comforts were amply supplied; and he would often say, "that man was rich, who was content with what he had."

Whilst Cranmer lived unmolested, Wilford, by the favour of his excellent patron, was secure; but ever since the melancholy fate of that great martyr, he had looked forward, as a certain consequence of his master's fall, to the day of persecution for himself. Cardinal Pole, acquainted with his character, and using towards him that moderation which he wished to be extended to all the Reformers, had suffered him to remain undisturbed in his cure, and contented himself with enjoining Wilford (as he had done all others of the clergy within his diocese) to perform mass in the Latin tongue, instead of the service of the English liturgy adopted in the reign of Edward the Sixth; to see that his parishioners came to confession, that the rood should be set up again in his church, and that holy bread and water should be distributed to the people. And though it was said that the enemies of Wilford whispered in the ear of the Cardinal, that he did not obey these orders, but still read the English liturgy, and preached against Popery as zealously as ever yet the Cardinal—either from inattention, or an unwillingness to bring forward a man whose character he respected, but whose disobedience, if he did so, he must punish by the laws against heresy—still suffered him to be undisturbed.

The insignificance, too, of the place of which he was the pastor, had been in some measure his protection: so that, whilst the more known and distinguished clergy and the inhabitants of large towns were dragged to the stake, the little village of Wellminster for a time escaped the violence of the general persecution. Another cause also existed, that had hitherto helped to save Wilford. Sir Richard Southwell, high-sheriff of the county of Kent, a man of power and wealth, lived near the village, at his family mansion of Wellminster Hall; and though a rigid bigot, had not interfered to injure Wilford; nay, it is not unlikely that he had extended to him his protection, since it was rumoured that the knight was under peculiar obligations to the Pastor for some extraordinary acts of service.

But be it as it may, Sir Richard and Owen now lived as strangers to each other. And though the good minister was thankful to Providence that he had hitherto escaped persecution, yet he did not place any reliance on the present silence with which he was passed over, and had long endeavoured to prepare his mind for the worst. Desirous to save his son from the dangers that threatened the Reformers in England, he took the first opportunity of writing by a sure hand, bidding him to

continue where he was, at Frankfort, till a change in the government, or till better times, might warrant his return in safety. Having finished and despatched this letter, he prayed God that it might reach its destination, and produce the desired end.

Thus, in some degree relieved of this care, with a quiet but undeviating constancy, Owen Wilford continued the exercise of his duties, and stood openly and firmly in his pulpit, a supporter of the Reformed faith.

And as, when describing the character of a man, it is natural to say something of his person, we shall state that Owen was of a tall and dignified figure. The expression of his countenance was intellectual; whilst an air of serenity and benevolence gave an assurance of the simplicity and the kindness of his heart. A more venerable person could scarcely be imagined. Attired in his long black gown, his grey hairs falling over an elevated brow, whilst his furrowed cheek glowed with the fervour of religious feelings, that animated with unusual lustre his expressive eye, he seemed to realize those ideas that we are apt to form of the primitive fathers of the church; and, as he raised his hands towards heaven to bestow upon his congregation the benediction of God, he appeared to be rapt beyond the things of this world.

One morning, whilst Wilford was preparing to take his usual walk round the village of Wellminster, he was surprised by the sudden entrance of his old and faithful servant, Abel Allen, who appeared greatly disturbed, and running up to his master, said in a most agitated manner, "Thornton is coming!"

"Thornton!" exclaimed Wilford, "Thornton! and to *my* house?"

"Ay, Thornton is coming, sure enough," replied Abel; "and I don't think he is coming alone either, for I saw him standing in the green lane near Gammer Plaise's cottage, with a couple of fellows of his own kidney, and I do think there was more of them still behind. But who cares for that?" added the old serving-man stoutly; "shall I knock him down, or shut the door in his face?"

"Do neither," replied Wilford; "I will not refuse to see him; although, if I did so refuse, I could find a warrant for it in my own breast. Yet, I will see him. Shew him into the little oak parlour, and tell your mistress, Dame Alice, what sort of a visitor we are like to have. I will prepare my mind to meet that man, if I can, with composure."

Abel departed, to obey the instructions of his master; whilst

Wilford, who appeared extremely affected by the very mention of Thornton's name, paced up and down the room with an agitation of manner that was rarely seen in a man of so mild and patient a temper. He then descended to the oak parlour, where he found his wife (who had been warned by Abel of Thornton's approach) busily engaged in putting several things away in a closet.

"Alice," said Wilford, "you have removed it; bring the book back again, and lay it open, as it was, upon the table."

"Nay, do not bid me," replied his wife in an imploring tone; "do not bid me; consider what it is."

"I do so," answered Wilford, "and therefore I command you to obey me. Shall I fear to have the service of my God in my mother tongue upon my table, because Thornton the Suffragan Bishop of Dover is coming to my house? Shall I deny my Master before His enemies, because they are *my* enemies too? Thank God, sinner as I am, I can meet Thornton with a clear conscience. Bring back the book this moment; and what have you done with Luther 'De Captivitate Babylonica?'"

"Oh, do not make me bring that book, I conjure you," said Alice, wringing her hands. "If you do, you are a lost man, though Cardinal Pole himself should plead for you. Be content, I have put the Liturgy on the table again; be content with that. Why rush into danger? And oh, my dear Owen, my husband, don't, don't provoke Thornton; for my sake, for our children's, do be patient with him."

"Well, I will be patient, I will," replied Owen; "he is coming. Surely I heard old Abel opening the house-door."

"Yes," said Alice, "and Thornton is speaking to him."

"Good God!" exclaimed Owen, "must I suffer that man in my house?"

"Hush, hush, for heaven's sake!" said Alice, "he will hear you."

Wilford threw himself into a chair. He looked pale, but endeavoured to assume a composed air; whilst his wife, scarcely knowing what she did, yet desirous to seem to be employed, busied herself with some little matters of domestic arrangement in the apartment. The door opened, and the Suffragan Bishop of Dover entered the room.

Thornton was a man about forty years old, above the middle stature, strong and robust in his limbs, and had a countenance, in the features of which cunning seemed to contend with malice. There was about him that air of cold-

ness, affected humility, and inflexibility of feeling, which makes up the character of a hypocrite. His address and conversation were of a cast that we should now term puritanical: but Thornton was a zealous member of the church of Rome; and by some means or other he had grown rich, and even powerful, in the exercise of his zealous functions.

Wilford kept his seat; but Alice made the curtsey of salutation to the Suffragan Bishop, and he gave her a good-morrow, without noticing the coldness of his reception from the master of the house.

"Master Wilford," said Thornton, "some business of importance, of which I shall speak anon, has brought me hither. But how is your son? when had you tidings of him? and how is your pretty daughter, Mistress Rose? Thy children they are in the flesh; though, I grieve to say it, Master Wilford, they cannot be such in the spirit, since the new law, or rather the old law renewed, holds them illegitimate, no wedlock being allowed among the holy ministers of the church."

"If you are come, Master Thornton," replied Wilford, "to discuss points of the new law with me, I neither seek nor entertain the argument. My children are the offspring of a holy contract, sanctioned by God himself, and I never yet knew that human laws could set aside those that are of divine origin. But this is not the matter: your business with me, be pleased to state it, or I must bid you good-day."

"I had hoped for a more kindly reception from you, Owen Wilford," said the Suffragan, "since I came as a friend; but good deeds in this world meet with foul recompense."

"They do indeed," answered Wilford, "as none can better testify than yourself Master Thornton, and that by experience, for you once served Archbishop Cranmer, and can tell how he was requited."

Alice looked at her husband imploringly, as if she would say, "Forbear that point; do not provoke him." Thornton was unmoved; he had a conscience hard as the nether millstone, and he did not now choose to understand this glance at his own ingratitude to Cranmer.

"I wait to learn the nature of your business with me," continued Wilford, "and having done so, the sooner we part the better."

"His Grace, Cardinal Pole," replied Thornton, "languishes much, and being in weak health, he can no longer exert himself to take an active part in public affairs.

"I am sorry to hear it," replied Owen, "for I cannot

choose but admire virtue even in an enemy, and the Cardinal's moderation would adorn a better faith."

The Suffragan shewed no displeasure at this remark, but continued: "I have full powers Master Wilford, both from the Cardinal, as legate *a latere* to his Holiness Paul the Fourth, and from our gracious sovereign, Queen Mary, and her council, to act in the place of the said Cardinal Pole, in the diocese of Canterbury; being joined in commission with certain other appointed authorities. In short, I come to see that those statutes passed in the parliament of the second of the present reign, respecting the affairs of the church, are duly and properly observed; and for this purpose, I am now peregrinating the diocese of Canterbury."*

"By the instigation of my Lord of London," said Wilford. "I perfectly comprehend it. Bonner, grown odious to the people by the cruelties he has exercised in his own diocese, to save himself, if possible, from utter detestation, has relaxed in some measure the persecutions of Smithfield; and now would cloak his malice, by extending them, with double fury, to the sees of other bishops. If I mistake not Master Thornton, you were specially nominated Suffragan Bishop of Dover by the recommendation of my Lord of London. Doubtless you have his counsel what to do. Are you to begin with me?"

"Nay," said Thornton, "do not speak thus warmly. Did I repeat such words as you now utter, think what would be the consequence! But I will give you a proof of that moderation you are pleased to commend in his Grace, Cardinal Pole, my very good lord. I will set down your words to the score of passion; and passionate men and madmen being of one nature, as the late learned medical docter Butts used to say, I will pass them over unnoticed, and give further proof of my goodwill and friendship towards you."

"I want neither," replied Wilford. "Once more, tell me the matter of your business with me, and, in heaven's name depart, if you can, in peace."

"I came hither in peace," said the Suffragan, "and so will I depart. I come to propose some questions to you, Owen Wilford, and to offer you some terms, easy to perform—Allow me to call in my secretary."

The Bishop of Dover, for a minute, quitted the room, and

* In the articles sent by the Queen to her Ordinary, are these words. "Item: that every Bishop, Suffragan Bishop, and all other persons aforesaid, do likewise travel for the repressing of heresies and notable crimes, especially in the clergy, duly correcting and punishing the same according to law."

returned, followed by a little thin man, dressed in a black gown, a bundle of papers in one hand, a satchel at his back, an inkhorn depending from his button, and a flat and square black silk cap on the crown of his head. His eyes were small and red like those of a ferret; and his nose of considerable length, looked like a label for an inscription, upon which might be written the word 'impudence.'

"Sit down, Master Secretary," said the Suffragan, "and write the answers to some questions that I have to propose to this man here present."

"Is my own house to be made a court of inquisition?" exclaimed Owen. "I shall answer you no questions till I see the warrant upon which you act."

"The warrant is my word," said Thornton haughtily.

"Not with me," replied the Pastor calmly.

"Shew this man the warrant, then, Thomas Cluny," said the Suffragan to his Secretary. Cluny shuffled over the papers, took out a fair written parchment, to which was appended a large seal; and coming up to Wilford, he said, "Be pleased to see the broad-seal of England. The warrant is from the Council; shall I rehearse the indictment?"

"No," answered Wilford; "I see this is a net to catch me. But, thank God, I am prepared. What are your questions?"

"Have you," said Thornton, "caused the rood, sent here at Candlemas last, to be set up in a fair loft in the church of St. John the Baptist, in the parish of Wellminster?"

"No!" exclaimed Wilford; "the wooden god of your idolatry lies now where it was left by your own people, in the belfry of the church. I will never, like Nebuchadnezzar, set up a golden image,* and bid the people to fall down and worship it, at the sound of the lute, harp, cornet, or dulcimer. I deny the worship of *your* cross, and I will never yield to it."

Thornton shook his head, whilst Cluny s square cap shook in accompaniment to the same. He dipped his pen in the inkhorn. "Write down that he denies the cross," said the Suffragan.

"An offence under the statutes of Richard the Second, Henry the Fourth, and Henry the Fifth," said Cluny. †

* The rood was an image of Christ between St. John and the Virgin Mary. It was generally magnificently painted and gilt. It was set up towards the east, in a loft of rich Gothic screen-work, styled the 'Rood-loft.'

† In 1551 the Parliament passed an act to revive the cruel statutes of Richard the Second, Henry the Fourth, and Henry the Fifth, against all persons convicted of heresy.—*See* Burnet.

"Write, that I deny your crosses of wood and stone," said Wilford; "and you will find that comes under the statute of God's first commandment—'Thou shalt worship no graven image.'"

"That is the Levitical law," cried Thornton. "Why, the holy Saint Austin defend us! have we to deal with a Jew here?"

"Shall I write down that Master Wilford confesses only the Levitical law?" inquired Cluny. "That offence comes equally under the aforesaid statute."

Wilford looked at the secretary a moment with contempt; but, resuming his composure, he said, "Why should I be angry with thee, poor wretch! thou art nothing more to this man than that pen is to thee,—his instrument. I will save your pains; write all in one word—write that I deny the supremacy of the Pope, the errors of the Church of Rome, and acknowledge only the truth of the Christian faith, as it is revealed to us in the Gospel itself. I will answer no more questions. And now do your work, for I am ready."

"That's clear!" exclaimed Cluny; "that comes under the direct statute for heresy, in the second of the present reign. Denies the Pope! here be heresy indeed: I must make a note of this;" and again Cluny dipped his pen into the little inkhorn. "This ink is as bad and as muddy as if it were manufactured in a scrivener's shop."

Cluny once more prepared to write; but Alice, who had listened, in an agony of feeling, to the bold and open confession made by her husband of his faith, now sprang towards the table, and snatching the pen from Cluny's hand, she exclaimed, "You shall not, you shall not write it? He is no heretic, but a good Christian! Spare him! oh! spare him!"

The Suffragan Bishop, who had hitherto stood quite unmoved, now interfered; and bidding Alice be quiet, or that she would make things worse, he desired Cluny to continue his business; whilst Alice wept and wrung her hands; alternately assuring the Bishop that her husband was a true Christian, and imploring Wilford not to provoke the anger of his enemies. Wilford gently removed her from him, and stood silent, with a firm and upright demeanour, as the secretary wrote down the confession he had made of his faith. This accomplished, Thornton whispered something in the ear of his secretary, who departed, and in a few minutes returned, accompanied by a number of persons, headed by the town-constable of Canterbury: this band having purposely been laid, as it were, in ambush near

the house, ready to obey the orders of Thornton. Alice saw them pass on the outside of the window, as they came to enter the house; and uttered a loud scream, clinging to her husband, and almost fainting in his arms.

"Take the woman off," said Thornton to Cluny, who had again entered the room.

"You shall not touch her," exclaimed Wilford, in a tone of more passion than he had yet used; "she is my wife, my dear and honoured wife. God gave her to me, and none but God shall part us."

"Hear him!" said Thornton, "hear him! he calls his harlot his wife! But this must be no longer endured. The Church has too long dealt mercifully with thee. Such open shame may no longer be endured.—Cluny, I say, take that woman from the man, and let them both hear the denunciation of the true Church against their offence. I arrest you, Owen Wilford, on your confession, for heresy.* I expel you in the name, and by the authority given under the warrant, of the Queen and Council. I expel you from this cure as a married priest, as an obstinate and disobedient heretic, and as a traitor to his Holiness the Pope. You, and the harlot you call your wife, are henceforth for ever parted; and she will be made to do a necessary penance for her offence, as the law enjoins."

"Under the proclamation against harlots and disorderly persons," said Cluny, "of the second of the present reign, the said penance to be done barefooted, in a white sheet, with a fagot in one hand and a taper in the other, in the nearest church or churches of the parish or parishes where the said offence was committed, according to the said proclamation of the said date."

"My wife! my poor Alice!" exclaimed Wilford, bursting into tears, "be of good cheer—look up, sweetheart, and comfort me in the hour of my sorrow; for I am an old man, well nigh broken down with years, and it may be that I want God's grace to bear this trial. Where is our child, where is poor Rose?"

"Where are you, Owen!" said Alice, "oh, where will you be?—Good heaven! will they take you from us, and must and my poor girl live to see you in a prison! Oh, have these men no hearts?—Speak to Thornton. He must, he will hear

* Burnet declares that not less than twelve thousand of the clergy were turned out of their livings, under the Queen's proclamation, for having wives; and Fox tells us, that many of these unhappy men were accused of heresy, and suffered martyrdom. One of the charges brought against Cranmer was for having a wife.

you—I am sure he will! I will kneel to him to beg mercy for you, so that they may not take you to a prison."

"The statute for heresy commands it," said Cluny, again shuffling amongst the papers. "Here is the Act. 'That the prisoner or prisoners, on suspicion thereof (that means being suspected of heresy, Dame Alice) shall be taken *in corpore* (meaning in the body, Dame Alice), to the nearest prison or prisons, there to be held *in loco* (that is, in that place, Dame Alice), till he or they be brought before the appointed authorities of archbishop, bishops, suffragan bishops, archdeacon or deacons, prelates, priests, or proctors; or in default thereof, that he or they be brought before the nearest sitting magistrate, justice of the peace, mayor, port-reeve, constable, bailiff, or baillie for the time being."

"A truce with this jargon," said Wilford, "and tell me where I am to go, and what will become of my poor wife, and my innocent daughter, my dear Rose."

"Mercy will be shewn to them, and indeed to you, unless you are all obstinate," said Thornton: "you must to prison, and the woman too; for the present, your daughter will only be expelled this house."

"At present the women having been only charged with offences under the proclamation against disorderly persons," said Cluny, "the one being a naughty woman, and the other a bastard of the same, they must both be expelled the house."

"Is this your mercy," replied Wilford, "to cast upon the wide world an aged and honourable matron? to cast her from the sanctity of an honest home, for no other offence than that of having lived for more than thirty years the wife of a man who, since his marriage with her, has taken Holy orders?"

"Ay, and mercy it is," said Thornton, "when compared to what her shame deserves. A priest can have no wife."

"Why Cranmer was a married man," answered Wilford, "when you, Thornton, were his secretary, as well as myself, at Lambeth; and you never thought fit to cavil at it then. You were humble and observant in your manners to the prelate's wife, and she did you many an act of service, as well as your martyred lord."

"Ay," said Thornton, "it is true; but I have long since repented me of that in sackcloth and ashes, repented that I could ever bow me down to Jezebel: yea, better had it been for my soul, had I rose up, and cast her down to the dogs."

"Hypocrite!" exclaimed Wilford. "Gracious heaven!

how long will this man be suffered to persecute thy people, and to belie thy word! Look on me, Thornton! Dost thou remember when thou and I were both of us secretaries to Archbishop Cranmer?"

"I do remember a time of sin and sorrow," answered Thornton, "when I did serve Satan and the man Cranmer, whom you call archbishop; when King Henry the Eighth (St. Peter assoil him) denied the supremacy of the Pope, and set up a king-worship of his own; for the which offence, his Holiness, Paul the Fourth, of Rome, hath been pleased to absolve this repentant realm of England on its return to him, like the prodigal to the father in Holy Writ. I remember the days of my shame; wherefore, then, shouldst thou speak of Cranmer?"

"They were the days of thy shame, indeed!" said Wilford: "for Cranmer, thy gracious master, took thee up when thou wert nothing: he fed thee at his board, cherished thee in his bosom, and was as a father to thee and me; and how didst thou repay him?—With the basest ingratitude thou didst join with Gardiner to ruin him with King Henry: and when thine own letters were found to convict thee of the foul deed, then how thou didst kneel and beg for pardon! then thou didst stoop to solicit me to plead for thee, and I was thy dear Master Wilford, thy kind Master Wilford, and thy pitying friend; and Cranmer was thy merciful, very good lord; and thou didst then compare thyself with the prodigal, and him with the father who killed the fatted calf: and Cranmer, ever generous, humane, and noble, Cranmer forgave thee! no punishment followed thy offence; or long since thy name would have been numbered with traitors, who meet the reward of their deserts."

"If I sinned in humbling myself to Cranmer, as you would insinuate," replied Thornton, "it was the sin of necessity: and his Holiness Paul has absolved us of all such sins, and the gates of the blessed St. Peter are once more open to us, since her Highness has consented to pay his pence-money. Meet it is that it should be so, as we should render to all, and especially to saints, their due. But remember, I quitted the service of Cranmer long before King Henry's death."

"Cranmer, I remember, sent thee from his service," said Wilford; "for, though he forgave, he never more trusted thee. And in revenge of this, thou Thornton, thou wast the man who busied thyself to bring him to his ruin! Who marshalled the Lieutenant of the Tower the way to Cranmer's

lodging to arrest him? Who held the torch to light him up the stairs? Thornton, thou didst it! It was thy hand, thy heart, thy act, that helped thy benefactor to his death. I lost patience this day when I heard but thy name; few things could have so moved me."

"I shall not trouble myself farther with you," replied the Suffragan coolly; for, unable to answer the charges of ingratitude which Wilford brought to his recollection, he instantly turned to the business before him. "Secretary Cluny," he continued, "proceed to make out the committal of this man to Canterbury castle; I will put my hand and seal to it, for I will no longer hold parley with such a heretic."

"It were to be *particeps criminis*, if you did," answered Cluny, "and against the statute. Hath the prisoner any other name, cognisance, or appellation, besides that of Owen Wilford?"

"He has no other," said Thornton, "unless it were the name he, like a false-hearted liar, assumed when he once fled from England, and travelled to Rome itself in disguise."

"Shall I put down an *alias* then?" inquired Cluny.

"There is no need of that" said Thornton, "the evidence is clear."

"The evidence is most clear and satisfactory," answered Cluny, "being his own confession; and if we wanted more, I am a witness. And here, I think, Master Thornton, we have as pretty a case as can be, for the writ *De heretico comburendo*. Be so good Dame Alice as to sit down and be quiet, and do not disturb this reverend gentleman, and an officer of the law, in the execution of their duties."

Cluny proceeded to write as fast as his pen could go, the warrant for committal. Whilst he did so, Thornton demanded of Wilford his keys with much insolence of manner. "Take them," said Wilford; "there needs no violence, since I know I have no choice, but must needs surrender them to you."

"Master Attorney, Secretary Cluny," said Thornton, "I shall depart anon with the prisoner; and, as he is a man known to be dangerous in his speech, and has led astray many of the servants of his Holiness and of her Majesty, I shall not leave him till we arrive near Canterbury. When I am gone, you will search the house, and bring with you all such books and papers as may be necessary to convict this man of heresy. It will be a great act of justice to bring him to the stake, and to clear the house of the contamination of heretical doctrines. I shall leave Ralph Miller, the catch-

pole, to assist you in the work. I must now proceed to the church, to give orders about setting up the rood in the loft. You, Cluny, will presently follow me to Canterbury."

"The old woman goes to prison," said Cluny, "what is to be done with the young one?"

"My child! my Rose!" exclaimed Wilford, "let her go with us."

"There is no charge against her," said the Suffragan. "She may rest at large, but she and all your people must this night quit the house; Friar John de Villa Garcina is for the present appointed to take charge of your flock, and lead back the stray sheep into his Holiness's fold."

"What!" exclaimed Wilford, "Friar John, the Spanish monk who was placed with Cranmer to work upon his mind; and, by flattery, cunning, and the most consummate arts, to induce that great man to commit the only act of weakness he was ever known to fall into—must Friar John have the charge of my village? It was he who wrought upon Cranmer to sign his recantation. For which act my noble master extended his right hand to the burning flame, till it was withered and consumed before his eyes. Must Friar John become the wolf to prey upon my innocent flock?"

"Friar John for the present will hold the cure of this place, till a proper person can be appointed," said Thornton; "the work of faith will thrive when he sets about it."

"Rather say the work of destruction," added Wilford. "But I must submit. I will learn patience. For shall I so long have taken good at the hand of my Father, and shall I not take evil also? I yield, Thornton, for the power is given you over me. Yet, if you have one feeling common to human nature, even to the most savage among men, do not refuse a father's prayer; let me see my child. Let me bless my poor Rose, and I will depart with you to prison without complaint."

Thornton, though it cannot be supposed that he complied with this request from any motive of feeling, did not, however, refuse it; and the father received permission to see his daughter ere he left the house. Soon after, old Abel Allen, who had learned from the attendants of the Suffragan the duty they had to perform, feeling anxious to see his master before he departed to a prison, came into the room just at the moment when the good pastor's daughter also entered it, to bid a melancholy farewell to her parents.

CHAPTER II.

Rose Wilford was about seventeen years old, of a light and small figure, and possessed in her countenance that indescribable expression of simplicity and good-nature that wins the heart almost at the first glance. Yet, however pleasing Rose might appear to a stranger, it was only her more intimate friends who could duly appreciate her character. With the world, she might be deemed merely a good-natured girl, who, making no pretensions to anything out of the ordinary way, and being modest and simple in her deportment, was not suspected by the generality of persons to possess a mind of a higher and a better order than themselves. Her education had been the care of her fond father, who, knowing the times in which she was likely to live, early prepared her to meet them; so that the lessons of fortitude and prudence he had inculcated found a practical example of their utility in the scenes that daily passed almost before her eyes. These lessons, and these scenes of suffering among the Reformers, together with the peril in which Rose long knew her father stood, had given her a serious turn of thought, and considerably checked the natural vivacity of her spirits; so that, whilst yet a girl, she was a woman both in mind and manners.

Rose entered the room with a calmer and more composed countenance than might have been expected; and whilst her mother stood sobbing and lamenting her husband's fate, in all the bitterness of sorrow, Rose gently whispered her to bear up for her father's sake, and to trust in God for his deliverance. She then turned to Wilford, and begged his blessing.

"Thou hast it, my child," said Wilford; "thou hast my daily blessing and my prayers. May the God of all comfort, indeed, bless you! Rose, thy father is going to a prison. But be of good cheer, my girl, and remember there is One who is never deaf to the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners, and that those who suffer for His sake shall never meet loss. Though their bodies lie in the dust, yet shall they see God, and know Him even as they are known. Thornton," he added, turning to the Suffragan, "may this poor blossom of comfort, that still

hangs, though drooping, upon the withered tree of my falling house — may she sometimes be suffered to visit me in my prison? If you are a man, do not tear her from me at once — do not shut her out from these old eyes for ever—let me look upon her whilst sight is left to me in this world. To do so can neither hurt God nor man."

"I do not know that I should be warranted," said Thornton, "in allowing it. But, as far as I can go, I wish to use moderation towards yourself, and all other unhappy persons whose guilt may bring them under my hands during the peregrination of my commission. Still, I do not think I should do right in letting any person but the members of our church, who may convert, have access to a heretic; I think I am not warranted."

"Certainly not by the statute," said Cluny.

"Still, however," continued Thornton, "it may depend upon the damsel herself; if she is docile and willing to hear reason, and—in short, I must see what stuff she has in her, and then I may pronounce on this question. Master secretary, be pleased to make notes of her words. Come hither maiden," said Thornton, in a milder tone than he had yet used: "of what Church are you?"

"Of the Catholic," answered Rose.

"Humph!" said Thornton; "the Reformers say as much. But I suppose you are a chip of the old block. Are you of the Catholic, Universal, Apostolic, and Roman Church; answer me that?"

"Good lack," said Rose, who dreaded nothing so much as an answer that might be construed into a motive for keeping her from her father; "how should a poor simple maid like me take upon me to hold debate with you who are of the schools? I am a Christian, I hope; and if the Catholic, Universal, Apostolic and Roman Church believe what I do, they may be Christian people also, though I may not have sense enough to hold an argument on terms. So I trust your wisdom will not take offence, if I say, it is too deep for my simpleness."

"What am I to write down?" inquired Cluny of the Suffragan; "for this answer amounts to nothing. Be pleased to tell me, Master Thornton, for I really do not understand her."

"Nor is there need you should," said Rose, "since the Suffragan of Dover bid you write down my words. To understand them, I take it, is not your office; and the Bishop, I am sure, will not press upon a poor girl questions beyond her years."

"By the rood," observed Cluny, "you are a sly one, pretty Mistress Rose, or I am much mistaken. You would do to shift a point of law as well as Master Sergeant Twistem himself. Had you been a man, a gown and a trencher cap would be all you needed to fit you for a bencher; you seem to have a pretty notion of argument too."

"Her answer is knavish and incomprehensible," said Thornton: "one would think she had studied the law."

"Alack!" replied Rose, "if it is so, it can have nothing in it like law, I am sure; since law is made to uphold justice and truth, and knavery is opposite to both."

"This is a pretty bird, indeed!" said Cluny; "but we will teach her to sing out a full strain, and then see if she is a bird fit for a cage or not. Put her to the proof; touch her on the Sacraments, Master Thornton."

"No, no!" answered Thornton, "she is a young thing, I shall see more of her; I will not take the words of ignorance from her mouth, to catch her by them. I will take care to see her, to instruct her; I will not harm her."

"Thank God! I bless you for that," cried Alice: "you will not hurt my child? Thank heaven, at least you are pitiful to her!"

"I have a feeling of kindness for her indeed," said Thornton, "and it shall do you no harm that I have it; and Master Wilford will doubtless be grateful."

"No," said Wilford, "not if your kindness aims at overturning the principles of my child. I would rather that you tore her from my heart at once, than that you should tamper with her mind."

"Be silent, father," whispered Rose softly; "do not fear for me. Do not say a word that may hinder our meeting in the prison." And turning to Thornton, she added aloud, "I am told that I am this night to quit my home. May I crave your farther indulgence that I may be allowed to remove some few things necessary for the comfort of my parents? Old Abel Allen will help me to do so; and whoever you please shall see what I take. Much I cannot take, since I know not where I shall this night rest my head."

"But I know where you shall find a home, Mistress Rose," said old Abel, who dashed a tear from his cheek with a hand as rough and as hard as a horn; "my master's child shall never want a home whiles I can work or beg to get her one. My sister Littlewit, an honest widow of Canterbury, has a decent lodging, and thither will I take you."

"Thank you, Allen," replied Rose, "and I will be no cost to you, for I purpose to labour to help my poor father in prison."

"I will see that you shall want nothing, Mistress Rose," said Thornton, "unless you are obstinate. But the time waxes on. Take your leave of your father, for he must depart. Cluny, call in the bills; the man and woman must both to prison."

Wilford embraced his child. "Rose, my beloved Rose," said he, "this is but the beginning of sorrows. Remember the lessons that I have so often taught you, and that now is the time to practise them. Comfort your poor mother; speak to her, child; she has not thy strength of mind to meet evils firmly. Be kind, and a comfort to her in her prison, and God shall pour blessings on that young head, for He loves a dutiful child."

"My mother, my poor mother!" said Rose, "what can I do to comfort her? O my mother, trust in God in this hour of tribulation; and, though He seems to withdraw Himself from us, as if He were gathered into those clouds and darkness that hang about His dwelling-place, yet darkness to Him is as light. He sees us in our hour of trouble, and He will never forsake us."

"My child! my child! God bless you! and may He have pity upon your father!" was all that the afflicted Alice could answer to her daughter's pious address. Wilford looked upon them both for a moment with fixed attention: not a tear was in his eye; he seemed to be struggling with the powerful workings of nature, to preserve his composure in these last trying moments; but his lips quivered, and the bystanders could observe a convulsive movement in his throat. The struggle was too much, and nature gained the mastery, as he burst into a flood of tears that coursed down his venerable face, and would have moved to pity any hearts but those that were rendered callous by cruelty and superstition. Wilford broke from the man into whose custody he had been given by Thornton, and fervently clasping his aged partner to his bosom, he exclaimed, "My wife! my wife! and must we part after thirty years of mutual love? Must man tear asunder what God hath joined in one heart, one soul, one interest? Time had left us but a few years longer; and those are cut short by oppression, before death dissolves our bond. I could—I think I could bear much yet—poverty, sickness, imprisonment,—yea, the stake itself were better than this

parting; for I know they will sunder us at the prison. We may never meet again on earth; look up then sweetheart, and give me one kiss before I go."

Alice did indeed look up, and embracing her husband, she repeatedly kissed his forehead, his cheeks, his lips, as if she would concentrate in that moment the warm and holy affection of years of conjugal felicity and love. Thornton, on seeing this, turned aside with affected abhorrence, whilst Cluny drew his trencher-cap more towards the front of his face, and, shaking his head, looked with a reproving air at poor Alice and her husband.

"What!" exclaimed Thornton, "what! act abominations thus in the face of open day! This is a sight enough to make the heavens come down in vengeance upon you both. A priest! a man wearing that gown as a member of the church, and to play the wanton in the very sight of God's saints!"

"Why," said old Abel Allen, "no one sees it but us; and which of us be saints I trow? May it be your worship or master attorney? And if so, you are the first saints that ever I heard of that would take offence at a man for loving his wife."

Thornton did not deign at present to notice old Abel; but, turning to the catchpole, he said, "Take away the woman from that man's embrace; take her off, this moment; or I shall think myself a participator in this man's shameless sin, if I suffer the kiss of a heretic in my sight!" Thornton was obeyed.

Wilford remained silent for a moment; but he looked first upon Alice, and then upon Rose, with an expression the most heart-rending. At length he bent his head, and put both his hands over his eyes, as if he would shut out the sight of what was nearest and dearest to him on earth in the endeavour to calm his feelings. Once more he looked up; he seemed an altered man: the tear was no longer in his eye, although a few moist drops still hung upon his cheek. His manner was composed, quiet, and unresisting. "Thou, heavenly Father!" he exclaimed, "hast appointed to all men their trial, and their day of grace; oh! teach me submission. Bow this proud heart before Thee. Calm my spirit, and make me patient to take meekly this cup of affliction, and, if it be Thy will, to drain it to the last dregs cheerfully. In all things, I submit myself to Thee.—Farewell, wife! farewell, Rose! May God bless you both.—Now, Thornton, I am ready."

The Suffragan Bishop led the way, followed by Wilford and

Alice, both in custody of his officers. As they passed the door of the house, Abel Allen, heedless of the presence of Thornton, rushed forward and caught Wilford by the gown. "My master, my dear master," said the old serving-man, "what will become of you? and don't go away without saying a good-by to your poor old servant. I will come to you in the prison, and I'll do anything for you. I'd go there in your stead if they would let me.—Do please to stand off," continued Allen, addressing the officers, "and let me say a last word to the master in whose family I have lived ever since I was a hand high. I only want to ask him a thing or two, that can hurt nobody."

"Good people," said Wilford, "indulge this honest man's wish. Stand off a moment, and let him speak with me." The request was granted. "Well, Allen," continued Wilford, "your master goes before you. If you are put to the proof, do not shrink from following his steps; for remember for whose sake it is we are thus tried."

"I do, I will," answered Abel; "nay, I could find it in my heart to ask to go to prison with you even now, but that I know I may serve you more by being out of one. But what I wanted to say is, that I don't half like Thornton's civility to Mistress Rose, for people do say that he never spares a pretty lass without he has something bad in his head about her. I will work these old hands to the bone," continued Allen, as he held them up, "before she shall ever come to the pass to go to the Bishop of Dover for care. Men say that he likes a fair damsel as well as ever Gardiner did, with all his sanctity."

"I have heard as much," said Wilford; "and the thought is like an adder stinging the heart of a father, when he thinks that his child may be in danger from such a man, and that he can no longer protect her."

"But Sir Richard Southwell may, and ought to do something," replied Allen; "I'll go to him myself, though I know how you have kept aloof from him ever since what happened before young master went abroad. What will your son, what will Master Edward say, when he hears of this chance?"

"He must long have been prepared to hear of it," replied Wilford, "for he knows how the times are in England, and that I could not always hope to escape them. God grant that he has my last letter, and may not return hither! Do you, Abel (for whom else can I trust?)—do you be a father to your master's child, and God will reward you."

"A father to my dear young mistress!" cried Allen. "May I never know what a moment's peace is in heaven or on earth, if I am not father, mother, servant, and brother, and all to her now; and I'll knock down Thornton if he does but look at her."

"Be careful what you do, Abel, for her sake as well as mine," said Wilford. "There is one thing I would ask of you. You are allowed to help Rose in securing some necessaries for our comfort; if it is possible, bring my English Bible to the prison; it may be useful, being in that tongue, to some fellow-sufferer, who might not be able to read it in the original."

"That I will, if I can," answered Abel; "I'll go back now and see what I can save from the clutches of that long-nosed rascally attorney. There's not a more dirty fellow in all Canterbury; and he was once secretary to Bonner. And who ever served the devil unless it was one of his own imps? Farewell, master; I'll do my best for you and Mistress Rose, and bring the Bible to you, though Thornton and Harpsfield, and the Pope himself, should stand in the way to bid me back again." So saying, Allen, sanctioned by long service, and the warm affection that makes men forgetful of the distinctions of place in the hour of affliction, shook his master heartily by the hand, and returned back to the house.

Thornton now, more fully to indulge his malice, and to shew the power that he had over Wilford, ordered him and Alice to be shut into a barn that stood near the church, whilst he proceeded to give orders for putting up the rood, to clear the desks of the liturgy in the English tongue, and all other books belonging to the service adopted in the time of Edward the Sixth, to make way for mass-books and missals, and all the other requisites of the Popish worship; and here, for the present, we must leave him, whilst we return to the good Pastor's house.

When old Abel Allen again entered the little oak parlour, he found Thomas Cluny, the pettifogging attorney, and his understrapper, Ralph Miller, the catchpole, busily engaged in rummaging over the contents of a closet, cabinet, and writing-table. Here lay books thrown indiscriminately together; there, many a fair written discourse, the production of Wilford's own pen, for the benefit of his congregation. And all the little articles of Alice's neat housewifery and poor Rose's industry were seen lying tossed and tumbled about without mercy, under the hands of these inquisitors. "What have we here?" said Miller, holding up by the corner a book printed in the black letter and bound in vellum.

"Alack!" said Rose, "that book is one of my mother's: she used it to help my father in edifying any of his parishioners who might be afflicted in conscience."

"Let's see the title of it, Ralph," cried Cluny, and he read aloud: "'A Salve for a Sore Soul; or, a Plaister taken from the House of Comfort.' That's foul, that's traitorous. Why that book was written by Doctor Mackerel, alias Captain Cobler."*

"I don't care who it was written by," said Rose, "there are many good things in that book, and I do not believe that Doctor Mackerel wrote it any more than I did."

"And what in the devil's name is this?" cried Miller.

"Nay," said Rose, "pray spare that book; give it me; it is —it is——"

"It is a book of magic, as I live!" exclaimed the Catchpole. "I'll not touch it, I'll not put my hand near it, lest the foul fiend should come up in his own person. I'll swear that I saw in it all the cursing and accursed characters of magic, the whole cabalistic alphabet at once."

"That comes under the statute," said Cluny, taking up the book, "against witches, witchcraft, wizards, sorceresses, jugglers, cunning women, and astrologers. So, so, Mistress Rose! I see we shall have a precious pot uncovered here."

"Alas, gentlemen!" said Rose, weeping, "how can you call the book by such hard names! It is Greek; it is the Phædon of Plato, written fairly out by the unhappy Lady Jane Gray's own hand. Cranmer, who dearly prized the book, because it was her doing, gave it into my father's keeping when his troubles first began, before he was sent to the Tower. And when Cranmer was burned, my father kept the book in memory of him, as well as of the Lady Jane."

"Yes, yes," cried Cluny, "I knew from the first that it was Greek. But I wanted to try you, just to frighten you a little, to see if you would speak the truth. I know Plato very well; he was a great divine, quite a Saint, and much favoured by the Pope. Pray, Mistress Rose, do you read Greek?"

"My father gave me the tongues," answered Rose, "as a part of my daily lessons, and I hope that I have profited something by his instruction."

"I warrant you have," said Cluny, "and that you would use your tongues, as you call them, to chop doctrines with me. But we must go on with our work.—Ralph Miller, hand me

* Dr. Mackerel headed a rebellion in the reign of Henry the Eighth, under the name of Captain Cobler.

down that book in the red velvet cover, with the silver clasps."

Rose seemed concerned, and stood anxiously expecting the result of the inspection. Cluny looked at it with an air of self-importance, shook his head, and said, "That book is enough to do your father's business; that comes directly under the prohibition of the proclamation in the second of the present reign. That's the English Liturgy.—Ralph Miller, put that into the satchel; that's evidence.—And what have we here? 'The Supplication of Beggars, by Simon Fish.' Pshaw! that's a stinking fish, indeed; it savours of Luther, Calvin, and Knox, all in one mess; it has an odour worse than that of an old tripe-wife's tub. Let the fish go into the satchel, Ralph Miller; and here, let it keep company with the 'De Captivitate Babylonica' of Luther; add to it this infamous book of 'The Whore of Babylon unmasked in her Scarlets at Rome;' and then, I think, you will carry with you as pretty a bundle of heresy as ever the devil wove into one knot."

"They are all evidence," said Miller.

"Evidence!" echoed Cluny, "better evidence than a thousand tongues; every page is evidence; any one of them is enough to convict an offender, since her Grace, Queen Mary, has been pleased to make it high treason to have an heretical book in any person's house. And Master Wilford's name I saw in every volume."

"Certainly," said Miller, "that is presumptive evidence that they were his books."

"It is evidence," cried Cluny, "presumptive, positive, and circumstantial. The Earl of Surrey lost his head for a coat of arms, on the same kind of evidence; the fact of treason, therefore, is assumed."

"We have now pretty well done with the books," said Miller. "Here is one called 'Quoth He and Quoth I;' is that heresy, Master Attorney?"

"Heresy!" exclaimed Cluny, "heresy! why I pity thy ignorance, catchpole Miller; it is a gem amongst books, a very pearl cast among swine. 'Quoth He and Quoth I,' is a work of Sir Thomas More's, and a sweet companion it is to his blessed book on the 'Comfort of Tribulation,' and the 'Supplication of Souls in Purgatory.'"

"And you will not take them too?" said Rose; "surely you do not call them harmful?"

"Keep the peace, Mistress Rose," cried Cluny; "keep the peace; don't disturb an officer of the law in his duty. And

please to hand me over that book which the old man took off the table just now."

"I can't spare that book," said Abel very coolly; "I keep that for my own use."

"What!" cried Cluny, "contumacious? Do you dare to interfere with justice? Do you know the statute, the penalty for such an act? That all such person or persons, so hindering, letting, obstructing, or offending, the said officer or officers, shall be liable to——"

"I know nothing about *statues*," said old Abel bluntly; "but I know the book is mine, and I won't part from it, and I have it. And you know, Master Attorney, there's an old saying, that possession is nine points of the law; and if you want a tenth, and attempt to take it from me, I'll knock you down, and that will be law with a strong arm, after your own fashion." And Abel shook his fist at the attorney as he spoke.

"Ralph Miller," said Cluny, "you are a witness. This man obstructs an officer at law in the execution of his duty. You are also a witness that he has offered violence and intimidation, both by word and bodily action. This is actionable. I shall order him into custody."

"Oh, Abel!" said Rose, "how can you speak so to Master Attorney? Do not let them take you from me. Give up the book; for my sake do it, only for my sake."

"Well," replied Abel, "for your sake, my dear young mistress, I will do it. But as for the attorney, Cluny there, before I would give it up to him, I would——"

"Hush, hush!" said Rose, "do not speak your mind; you will but provoke him. Give up the book quietly."

"Take it then," cried Abel, and he threw it down upon the table. "It is the Bible."

"Tindall's translation, as I live!" exclaimed Cluny, "and printed in the time of Henry the Eighth. St. Nicholas bless us! what a work was that—what a shameless laying open of sacred mysteries to the eyes of laymen and the vulgar! Holy things should be locked up in an unknown tongue, to keep them from pollution.'

"Master Attorney," said Abel bluntly, "I know nothing about the right or the wrong of it, in letting us poor men understand God's word in our mother tongue, which we never could do, so long as it was shut up in Latin. But all I do know is, that I have a fancy for that book, for I learnt some good things, and useful things too, out of it, and amongst

them I was taught that the world loveth its own. And all people say, the love of the men of the law is money. Now I have saved a little, by long service; and I'll give you a fair angel of King Edward's, if you will let me keep that book, and say nothing about the matter."

"What! what!" exclaimed Cluny, "a bribe; offer me a bribe! What do you take me for, pray?"

"An attorney," said Abel; "you might have known that, when I offered to pay for being allowed to keep what was my own."

"And do you dare to suppose that I would take a bribe?" cried Cluny, "and have you the impudence, thus publicly, to offer it? But know, sirrah, that I scorn your insolence, and that I do all things according to law. Ralph Miller, take these keys, and Mistress Rose will conduct you; she is obliged to do it by the statute, in proceeding to search the house above stairs for the books and papers of a heretic. Go up with her and bring down whatever you find—there now, begone!"

Miller obeyed, and Rose followed him, to conduct the catchpole into her father's chamber, where he usually studied. Cluny and Abel remained below. "And pray, old man," said Cluny, "what could induce you to presume to offer me a bribe, an angel, to let you keep that book, when the catchpole was in the room? Do you know the consequence of such an offer? Do you know the statute? Do you know the penalty? Do you know what you are liable to? It comes under the statute for attempting to corrupt, suborn, and lead astray by bribes, or bribery, the officer or officers of the King's or Queen's Highnesses, in the discharge of their duties. I am a considerate man myself; but I can't answer for Ralph Miller—he may bring an indictment against you for the offence. Something ought to be done to make him hold his tongue. I answer for no man's discretion but my own;" and Cluny took off his trencher cap and put it down upon the table with a slap.

Allen smiled archly, and looked at him and at the cap from out the corner of his eye; as much as to say, I see what you want.

"Had you asked me quietly and in private," continued Cluny, "just to give you the book; that is, had you asked me not to see it; why, I would have turned my back, as I do now." The attorney turned his back towards the table. "And as the Bible is the Bible, if it be in English, Hebrew, or Latin, why, I don't see there's flat heresy in letting a man keep a copy of it, if he asks it of me as a favour. But, fie

upon it! not by offering bribes, and to an officer of the law, and before his own catchpole; fie, fie!" (Cluny put his hand behind him and shuffled his cap that lay upon the table) "and Ralph Miller, as I said before, may bring an indictment, unless I give the fellow an angel to make him drink a cup of ale and forget the circumstance: and I have a feeling of pity for a faithful servant like you, and I may do something; for I was always reckoned a merciful man, even when I was an under-secretary to the clerk of the Star-Chamber."

"My father was Yorkshire," said old Abel Allen, "though I be a Kentishman; and your Yorkshire folk are cute enough to teach their sons the way of the world, so I understand you master attorney. And don't look round just yet; but good luck to you with your trencher cap when you next put it on your head;" and Abel slipped the angel under the cap as he spoke. "And now, master attorney, do you speak to Miller, and I 'll now beg the book of you in charity, for we are in private."

"Put it in your pocket," said Cluny, "and say nothing about it. But I really don't know what you mean about my cap," added Cluny, as he slipped his hand under it, secured the angel, and then clapped the cap upon his head.

The door opened, and Ralph Miller entered the room, carrying a bundle of papers, and followed by Rose, who looked extremely alarmed. "I shall now proceed," said Cluny, "to examine these papers; and in the mean time, do you Mistress Rose and you Abel Allen, collect together what you wish to remove from the house, and we will search them before we depart. Go about it quickly."

Rose again quitted the oak parlour, now followed by Abel Allen. Cluny and the catchpole commenced the examination of the papers. "The Bishop of Dover was most particular in directing me," said Miller, "to give every letter into his hands, because such things may throw some light on the connexions of this heretic, whom, as he was one of Cranmer's gang, the Bishop would make an example of for the benefit of others."

"Assuredly," said Cluny; "the Bishop's orders shall be fulfilled. But what bundle of letters is that you are putting into your pocket? Hand them over to me."

"May I do so and obey the Bishop?" inquired Miller.

"Undoubtedly," answered Cluny; "the law gives full power to the deputy acting in the place of the principal—*ergo*, I, standing here in the place of the aforesaid Bishop for

the time being, possess the authority as the Bishop. I do all things according to law—so be pleased to hand me the packet."

"There it is," said Miller; "and as I take it, the packet must be of some consequence, for only see the indorsement on these letters: 'Copy of a Correspondence between Edward Wilford and the unfortunate Sir Thomas Wyatt, beheaded for the late Rebellion.'"

"That smells of treason, Miller," said Cluny; "that comes under the statute of the twenty-first of Henry the Eighth; 'every person or persons holding conversation or communication, either by letters, indictments, signs, signals, or symbols, with any offender or offenders convicted, suspected, or attainted for treason, shall be held *particeps criminis* in the said offence of the said offender or offenders.' This is an unlooked-for discovery."

"It is indeed," replied Miller, "and must go to make a charge, as I take it, against the old heretic's son, Edward Wilford, now in foreign parts. I will be most particular in giving this packet to the Bishop of Dover, for he called me aside, and laid a great stress on securing all letters; so, with your leave, Master Cluny, I'll put the packet once more in my pocket."

"Better let me deliver it," replied the attorney; "these papers come under the statute against treason, and not under that for heresy. The Bishop will most likely wish to hand them over to the civil power."

"Be that as it may," answered Miller, "I found the letters, not you, master attorney; so I am answerable for them. And here they go into my pocket.

"The devil take the fellow's impudence," muttered Cluny. And then he added aloud, "Ralph Miller, it appears to me that you have had much labour and toil in conducting this affair; and I don't see why you should not refresh yourself with a cup of good ale. I'll warrant we shall find it here, for I never yet knew a reformed parson but what had a larder and a buttery fit to regale a lord. These heretics are great friends to creature comforts, and put aside those holy fasts that we of the true church observe. Call to that old fellow Abel Allen, and bid him bring us a flagon of his best home-brewed."

"What, Abel! Master Abel Allen!" cried Miller aloud, as he opened the door of the room, "we would desire of you to bring down some of your bundles for us to search them, and

then to supply us with something to cheer up our hearts to the work. We would crave a flagon of your best ale, and, if you have it, a slice or so of a cold capon, or anything that may be at hand."

"What!" said Abel, as he returned to the oak parlour, "am I to see my old master's house searched and robbed before my eyes, and am I to feed the thieves that strip him? Help yourselves to what you want, as you have done already in other matters; I am no waiter on St. Nicholas's clerks; nor need I cater for an attorney, for he has a nose and a hand long enough, and ready enough to lead him to other men's goods."

"Insolent varlet!" said Cluny, "hold your peace; and don't be a fool Abel," he added in a lower voice. "Dont' you remember what I promised just now to do to make Ralph Miller hold his tongue about your indecency in offering me a bribe? have you forgot? I have tutored him. The Miller will let your sack go untolled—so begone, and bring up the ale; but stay, first put down that bundle you have under your arm, and we will just look at it slightly for form's sake, only for form s sake, whilst you fetch the ale."

Abel obeyed, and went, though with evident reluctance, to get the refreshments required of him.

"Miller," continued Cluny, "now the old rascal is off for the ale, lose no time in searching that bundle: so begin with this woman's gear, which I see it contains, and look that nothing escapes you."

"Here's a purse," said Miller, "in the bundle, and I see the gold shine through the network."

"I seize it," cried Cluny; "I seize it in the name of the Commission. Prisoners and heretics must not be allowed money to bribe, corrupt, suborn, or lead astray the King's or Queen s officers and subjects; it is against the statute. I will put this purse into my own pocket, and render it up to the proper authorities. I now take it by virtue of the law. These gold fish would come into a precious net indeed, did they rest in the keeping of a heretic as baits to angle with."

"Better count over the pieces, however, Master Attorney," said Miller, "that you may know for how much you have to render an account."

"No," answered Cluny, "I'll not so much as touch the strings of the purse; and as to opening it, upon no consideration would I suffer you to do so; the law gives me the power to seize, but none, as I take it, to reckon; and as the security of these moneys is the chief point, lest they be made the

instrument of sin and corruption, it were far better that they remained untouched in the hands of the law."

Cluny pocketed the money, and hearing the door open, he looked around.

"Here comes Mistress Rose," said he. "Mistress Rose, be pleased to walk aside to that window; my duty obliges me to look to the searching of these goods before they are removed, yet the tenderness of my feelings (a very weak failing, I grant, in a man of my office) makes it painful to me that you should witness what must be a sore sight to your eyes—I would spare you all unnecessary griefs—so be pleased to stand off whilst Miller continues the search." And with these words, Cluny took Rose by the shoulders and fairly shoved her to the window, where he placed her with her back towards himself and his companion. He returned to the catchpole.

"Ralph Miller," continued Cluny in a whisper, "thrust your hands into the pockets of these garments; they may contain letters of consequence that the Suffragan would especially desire you to produce;—stoop down, and examine that grogram taffeta, for it hath a huge pouch apparently well stuffed."

The catchpole obeyed; and whilst he did so, Cluny, who narrowly eyed him, observed the corner of the packet of those letters he had been so desirous to possess, just peeping out from the pocket of Miller's doublet. Cluny slipped behind the catchpole's back. Rose kept her station at the window, not daring to move on account of the terror in which she held the inquisitors. Miller was busily engaged in hunting the gown of grogram taffeta as Cluny continued saying, "And you know, Ralph Miller, the consequence of securing all papers as directed by the Bishop of Dover, and more especially such as may have a reference to treasonable practices. It were better for you, Ralph Miller, did you lose your ears than one such document, either by fraud, carelessness, or inattention, as such a loss might be to the profit of others, but certainly at your own peril." And whilst he was thus speaking, the cunning Cluny, having watched his opportunity, softly and gently drew the packet of letters out of Ralph Miller's pocket, and very quickly slipped them into his own, and never once moved from his station till the more simple and unsuspecting catchpole had finished his search.

By this time Abel had returned, bearing reluctantly a large flagon of strong ale for the refreshment of the inquisitors. Cluny knew well the weak point in Miller's character, and he now plied him with cup after cup, as fast as he could swallow

them. It was the attorney's object so to muddle Ralph's brains, which at no time were of the clearest, that he might hereafter be induced to believe he had lost the packet of letters either in the house or when he had quitted it; the possession of those particular letters, from some cause or other, being necessary to Cluny himself. Cluny, it is true, sat down at the table with Miller, and affected to take a share of the ale; but he was careful only to taste the cup, and to leave nearly all the contents of the potent flagon for Ralph, who, unable to resist temptation, forgot his business past, present, and future; and fearing the return of the Suffragan before he should get to the bottom of his draught, made such good haste to answer Cluny's pledge, to the health of the Queen and the success of the Commission, that he was more than bewildered in his ideas when the return of Thornton once more to the oak parlour suddenly put an end to this hasty carouse.

Thornton looked severely at Miller; and asked Cluny what was the meaning of this indulgence in his assistant, at a time when he ought to be engaged in the discharge of his duty. "Ralph Miller," replied Cluny, "is one of those persons who lack a draught to help them through their work. But (he added in a lower tone of voice, as he looked significantly at the Suffragan) the fellow is stanch, very useful in his way; though, I grieve to say it, he never knows when he has enough; lacks discretion, Master Thornton, lacks discretion. But we must bear with him, since he is no flincher in these necessary matters. You had better, perhaps, all things considered, send him forward with the rest of the officers. What has your reverence done with the old heretic and the woman?"

"Shut them up in their own barn," replied Thornton, "whilst I went to see matters duly arranged for Friar John in the church. Here, Miller, do you go forward to the barn; take up your satchel, it seems well loaded. The prisoners must forthwith be conducted to Canterbury Castle." Miller took up the satchel, heavily laden with the spoils of Wilford's small library, and making sundry lateral movements, managed to stagger out of the house, nearly knocking down Abel, whom he chanced to meet in his way to the door. Cluny also quitted the house.

Rose, who was in the oak parlour when she heard that Thornton was actually proceeding to remove her parents from the place where they had lived happily together for so many years of peace and love, wept bitterly, and begged the Suffragan to let her go to the barn, once more to bid them farewell. But Thornton denied this request, and bade her employ

the short time she had to remain in the house in collecting what things she might wish to remove for her own use. "And for your father, Mistress Rose. he is a man," said the Suffragan, "that I much desire to see his own friend, and that he may return again like a stray sheep to the true flock, and spare us of the Commission the pain of inflicting a wholesome and necessary chastisement. Mistress Alice will, I dare say, get clear upon doing penance;—and for yourself, Mistress Rose, I have an especial kindness for you, and much pity for your youth. If you are wise, no harm shall come to you; and I will myself take upon me the task of instructing your ignorance."

"I will not cumber you," replied Rose, "to make you, Master Thornton, the schoolmaster of so simple a maid as I am; and I hope that I shall not easily forget what I have already learned from my father. I would ask nothing of you but to be merciful to my parents."

"I will not hear any dangerous opinions from your lips, my pretty blossom!" said Thornton; "and as for your parents, you may do much for them with me. And I, considering you as a sister in much danger of straying into the path of perdition, I will take upon me the charge of your spiritual welfare. So be of good cheer, lass," continued the Suffragan, kindly taking her by the hand; "and do not mar those pretty looks with sorrow;" and he bent his head as he spoke, and somehow or other the Suffragan stooped so low that his face came in contact with Rose's blushing lips before she was aware of it, and Thornton gave those lips a hearty kiss; plainly shewing, that however obnoxious the kiss of a heretic might appear to him in others, he had no objection at all to it himself when the heretic was seen in the shape of a pretty girl. Rose blushed deeply, and started from the Bishop of Dover, hastily exclaiming, "Do you dare—"

Thornton interrupted her: "Only the kiss of peace, my child; nothing but the kiss of peace, enjoined to the members of the true church when they would greet each other in sisterly or in brotherly love. And I now give it you with my benison, in the hope that it may drive out the Evil Spirit, so that you may come back to the fold of his Holiness's flock.—And so, at present, farewell! and I will not lose sight of you in the desire to do you good, my pretty Rose in the midst of thorns."

The Suffragan patted the damsel on the cheek as he spoke, and, quitting the room, set forward to conduct his prisoners towards Canterbury.

CHAPTER III.

When Thornton proceeded to join Cluny and his attendants, in order to convey Wilford and Alice from the barn, where they had been held in custody for some time, he found to his surprise that the building was already surrounded by a crowd of people, who so pressed upon the officers standing as a guard over the prisoners within that it was with considerable difficulty they could be kept back. The news of what was going forward had been eagerly conveyed by a female servant of Alice to one or two of her gossips in the immediate vicinity of the Parsonage-house; and these gossips had lost no time in running down to the village to spread abroad the dismal tidings of the removal of their beloved Pastor from his people.

The alarm spread like wildfire; and in a few minutes there was scarcely a farm-house or a cottage but had sent forth its inmates to bewail the fate of Wilford; to see him, if possible, before he was conveyed to prison, to curse his oppressors, and had it been practicable, to have rescued their good father (for so they termed Owen) from the clutches of his enemies. Men, women, and children, had alike joined the throng; and no sooner did Thornton appear than the uproar became general, and a confused sound of shouts, hissings, hootings, curses, and imprecations at once burst upon his ears. "Silence these madmen," said Thornton to the officers; "do your duty, and arrest any one who shall dare to interrupt us in the discharge of ours, under her Majesty's commission. Who is it that is cursing me?"

"May it please your Reverence," said catchpole Miller, still staggering from the potent effects of the ale; "may it please your Reverence, they are all cursing you."

"Bring out the prisoners," said Thornton, "and set on for Canterbury this moment. Here be times indeed, when the rabble and the dolt-headed mob rail against the lawful authorities. Move that fellow from the barn door, and if he refuses to give place, take him into custody."

Wilford and Alice were brought out. The tide of public feeling was now turned for a moment into another channel; for, at the sight of Wilford, all hearts were melted into sor-

row; and tears and groans burst from the assembly, as the reverend Pastor, with a composed countenance and a meek and unresisting air, appeared before his parishioners in the hands of his hard-hearted enemies like a lamb led by butchers to the slaughter. Alice also seemed more composed than when she quitted the house. But no sooner did she witness the general feeling of sympathy excited by her condition than her fortitude forsook her, and she burst into tears as she spoke a few words of farewell to the inhabitants of the village who could get near enough to bid her an affectionate adieu.

Thornton, who now earnestly desired to hasten the removal of the prisoners, again ordered his officers to set forward, charging them to secure any one of the mob who should distinguish himself in the uproar, as it was impossible at present to wreak his vengeance on the whole body now assembled. But so great was the burst of popular indignation, that neither the authority of Thornton, nor the threats of his officers, could keep them within bounds.

"I wish," said Thornton to Cluny, who walked by his side, "that we had brought a body of her Grace's guards to assist us in conveying the prisoner; the town billmen are scarcely sufficient; but I did not expect such a scene as this."

"It would have been as well," replied Cluny, "since the military power, by virtue of the late proclamation, may be called in to assist the ecclesiastical. This uproar is punishable, even by the statute."

"Let us tear him from them," cried a loud voice amongst the crowd; "don't let that fire-and-fagot fellow burn our old Pastor, for the sake of the devil and the Pope."—"Knock them down! hang up the attorney, and let Thornton swing upon his wooden god, and see if a gilt figure will deliver him," exclaimed another. "O Wilford! Wilford! our dear Pastor, our good father, our friend, our benefactor, must we lose you?" "Down with tyrants and tyranny!" These and a thousand other like expressions resounded on all sides, as the Bishop of Dover and his officers proceeded, as fast as the throng would let them, to convey the prisoners down the village street. As they passed along, an aged and decrepit woman, whose infirmities had prevented her quitting her cottage, stood leaning upon a broom, with which she had been sweeping the little entry before her door. A youth, about twelve years old, was stationed near her, in the open pathway; and though he seemed, by the expression of his countenance, to partake in the general feeling, yet the fixed and

unaltered position of his head, that was bent down on his bosom, shewed that he was incapable of observing passing objects. "Why does not that youngster draw back, and make way for the Bishop?" said Cluny to an officer; "the obstruction is contumacious and impudent. Move out of the way, boy; don't you see, the most worshipful Suffragan of Dover is coming?"

"No," replied the boy, "I am blind. But Granny wishes me to beg the good father's blessing as he passes along."

"Thou hast it my child, thou hast it," said Thornton; and, with an assumed air of sanctity, he laid his hand upon the head of the blind boy as he spoke.

"Not thy blessing, Thornton!" exclaimed the old woman, who saw the action, and heard what passed. "Not the blessing of a mass-monger, and an idol-worshipper, and a blood-spiller, like thee. It is not thy blessing that I would seek for my Tommy. Take off that bloody hand from my boy's head; take it off I say, for thy god is as blind as my poor grandson's eyes; and he is deaf too—deaf as the god of the priests of Baal, for if you cry to him from morn till eventide, he will not hear you. Perchance he sleepeth! But the true God shall hear you, and He shall wake up to crush you and your cruel company."

"Who is that decrepit old wretch," inquired Thornton, "that bawls like a mad-woman at her Majesty's commission?"

"It is Gammer Plaise," said a stander-by. "She be the village potecary and midwife, and cures cows, as well as children, if they be sick."

"She has an evil eye, I suspect," said Thornton.

"If she has, she comes under the statute of the 33rd of Henry VIII." cried Cluny, "against witches and witchcraft. Only see what a bent back she has—a sure sign that she has long been ridden by the devil; and her nose and chin, that almost meet, look as if she could use them like hooks, to hold him fast by the tail. I'll make a note of her in my book as a suspected person."

"Do so," said Thornton. "And are you my lad, a follower of that old bedlamite, your Granny? Has she taught you her abominations?"

"She has taught me to love God, and to obey His commandments," replied the blind boy; "and to obey my spiritual teachers, pastors, and masters."

"And whom do you call your spiritual teachers, pastors, and masters?" said Thornton.

"Good Master Wilford, our father," answered the boy.

"Oh! what a foul heretic is that man," said Cluny, "who leads astray a whole parish, old women, little boys, and all. And we can't move, you see, most Reverend Suffragan, without his calling up a riot contrary to law, and in contempt of the high authority of these realms. Go back, lad; and if you are wise, leave that old woman, your granny, or she will bring you into trouble."

"Don't go back, Tommy," cried Gammer Plaise, as loud as she could shout; "don't go back. Ask the good man's blessing, or you shall want mine. Stand to the truth in the light of day, and glorify God and magnify His saints and His martyrs, though the Pope himself, with his excommunications, and his rods, and his racks, and his curses, and his priests, and his fagots, and his fires, and his purgatory, and his devils, stood before you, and fought you with them all. Down on your knees, boy! down, and beg Master Wilford's blessing, as you value body and soul; for you were a poor, blind, orphan boy, and Master Wilford has been as a father to you. You are fatherless by the wicked, but he took you up. Down on your knees, I say, though Thornton should roast you for it, as Bonner once threatened he would do to Tomkins, in a dry pan over a slow fire, after the Spanish fashion."

The blind boy obeyed his grandmother; and, feeling about him for a moment in the crowd, he at last caught Wilford by the gown, as he stood between two officers who were conducting him along; fell on his knees before him, and holding his hands pressed together, turned the sightless balls of his eyes up to heaven, as he raised his head, and said, "Dear Master Wilford, bless me before you go to prison; and if a poor child's prayer can do you good, these wicked people sha n't keep you long from us."

"God bless you, my poor child!" said Wilford; "be a good boy, mind your duty to God and man, be a comfort to your grandmother in her old age, and though God has been pleased to deprive you of the light of this world, He shall more than recompense you by that light of His blessed Spirit, before which there is no darkness. And remember, Tommy, to be peaceful, and to obey the lawful authorities, for His sake who has given them the power."

"Get up, boy, get up!" cried Thornton; "you stop our progress. Get up this minute!"

"Stand out of the way, child!" said Cluny, "or your back shall feel my walking staff, for your insolence to the Bishop

of Dover, in obstructing his progress. I shall be borne out by the law, if I strike you in assisting his Reverence."

"Don't touch the child!" exclaimed old Gammer Plaise, "don't touch so much as a hair of his head; for if you do, Master Attorney, I'll knock out your brains with my broom, with as little remorse as ever you shewed to ruin the most wronged man that came to you in his need. I know you, Thomas Cluny; I remember you before Bonner and Thornton took you up out of the dirt, to put their own dirty work upon you. I remember you when you stood in the stocks for picking a lock in the good widow Littlewit's house at Canterbury, and all the boys spattered you with rotten eggs, and every old wife shook her mop at you, and you slunk after the constable's heels like a beaten dog that hangs down his tail and ears."

Whilst old Gammer Plaise bawled out this address as loud and as fast as she could, in order to expose the attorney in the eyes of the villagers, Cluny, to shew his own contempt of her assertions, and his authority, gave the poor blind boy a hearty cuff, because he did not get fast enough out of the way. Gammar Plaise lifted up her broom, and would have made good her threats, could her old limbs have kept pace with her intentions; but her feeble arm, unable to manage her weapon, let it fall, and Cluny escaped with no other punishment than a hoot from the populace, with cries of "Shame, shame! to strike the poor blind child."

"No shame at all," said Thornton; "my Secretary acts under the commission, and has a right to use personal force, if persuasion will not avail in the execution of his duty; and that little heretic has shewn himself such, by begging a blessing of a man so arrested and accused as the prisoner. Good people, stand back, and cease this uproar, and let us pass in peace."

Gammer Plaise now raised her broom at the Suffragan himself. "What!" she cried, "do you, Thornton, encourage that dirty fellow that hangs at your skirts to beat my Tommy? but this is but a small thing compared to what you do to yonder good man. You take from us our minister, our friend, our comfort. But hark you, Thornton! you called me a witch just now, because I am old, and broken down with sorrow, and labour, and care, to see these times. But, witch or no witch, I will be to you a prophet of evil for the deed you do this day."

Thornton was about to interrupt her. "Let her go on," said Cluny; "she shook her broom at me just now, as witches

are wont to do; that's something worthy noting. Let her say her say, it will be evidence against her, and I am a witness."

"Hark you, Thornton!" continued the old woman; "you, and your fellows in blood, Bonner, and the rest of you, burnt at Smithfield my only son, the father of yonder poor blind lad. You first apprehended him, forsooth, because he was a bargeman to the Lady Jane Gray; and you burnt my son, between you, for a heretic and a traitor. But I live to curse you for the deed. I live to tell you, Thornton, that the blood of saints and martyrs shall rise up against you at the day of doom. That you and your Queen Jezebel, who now seats herself in high places, and sends out her people, saying, "Slay me this man, and burn me that, that I may make a sacrifice of a precious odour, to do incense to the Beast in his scarlets at Rome; she, I tell you, shall fall; her reign and yours shall be shortened. Ye shall triumph for a while; ye shall slay, and revel, and delight ye in the blood of God's people, till God has proved His own; but then ye shall fall, like the rebellious spirit, never to rise again; and men shall say of her, 'Take this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king's daughter.' And death shall call you hence, like a thief in the night, that slays the man of the house, when he thought the doors were made fast against him."

"High treason!" said Cluny: "she imagines the Queen's death. Shall I take her into custody now, or deal with her hereafter?"

"Not now," answered Thornton; "it will but add to the uproar. Note down her words, and you can send the billmen from the Castle to apprehend her at your leisure."

"Thornton," said Wilford mildly, for he saw to what danger the vehemence of Gammer Plaise would expose her, "shew mercy to that poor old woman. Her son was burnt at Smithfield; and whenever any circumstance brings that sad pass to her mind, she is half beside herself."

"She is a pretty sample of your flock, Master Wilford," replied Thornton: "do you suffer your parishioners thus to utter treason, and stir up strife, and rail against the Queen's Highness, in the public streets? Wilford, Wilford, this woman's conduct were alone sufficient to condemn you. You have badly filled your station, and I fear you are a naughty pretender to the truth of lawful supremacy and sway."

"So far from it, Master Thornton," answered Wilford, "that it was not longer ago than last Sunday that I discoursed to my parishioners a homily of my own composition, on the text of

obedience to the powers that be; as these good people will bear me witness." Wilford turned towards some of the inhabitants as he spoke; but the crowd was now too much moved calmly to listen to any appeal. The circumstance of Cluny striking the blind boy, the imprecations and violent discourse of Gammer Plaise, had all helped to stir them up to a feeling of irritation and wrath, that amounted almost to madness. Some struck the officers, others ventured even to assault the Bishop; and so great was the fury of the populace, that, had Wilford been of a more artful or daring character, in these moments of general uproar and confusion, he might have attempted, and perhaps with success, his escape. But so far was he from taking advantage of the circumstance, that he now loudly called upon his parishioners to hear him, and at length was suffered to address the people. "What! my beloved brethren," said the good man, "is it thus you reward me for all the benefits that, under God, I have endeavoured to bestow upon you? Will you make me believe that I have taught you your duty in vain? These men, in whose hands it has pleased Almighty Providence to place me—these men are but the instruments of the lawful sovereign, Mary Queen of England—a Queen, though it may be a severe one, whom God has placed over you. But she is your Queen and mine, and we cannot resist her authority without disobedience to His word, who has said resistance is punished with death both of body and soul. I am innocent, my dear brethren, of the things charged against me; I am a freeborn Englishman, and, as such, cannot fall but by the laws of my country. I shall be examined, tried, and heard in my defence: do not, therefore, interrupt the exercise of a power against which God himself has taught us we must not rebel. And, believe me, that armed as I am with a clear conscience and a reliance on heaven, I feel my heart light within me; I feel that I am going to my trial, to be proved at the bitter waters of strife, but that my deliverer is at hand. Pray for me; nay weep for me; but remember, I beseech you, the lessons I have so often taught you in yonder church, and do not let my sorrow be the occasion of your sin. I rebuke you now, to save you hereafter: silence, submission, and resignation, these are things that I require at your hands, that we may not part in anger, but, as we have lived, in the bond of peace and charity."

The serious and emphatic manner, the composed aspect, with which Wilford made this address to the assembly, sensibly affected all hearts. That violence which had before raged

like the tumult of a stormy ocean, was in a moment calmed; and tears ran fast down the poor people's cheeks, as they begged pardon of their pastor for what they had said or done to offend him; and sobbed out a last farewell, in voices rendered inarticulate with grief. The old invoked blessings upon his head, the women begged blessings of him for their children, the stout and the young men eagerly pressed about him and wrung him by the hands; and children, nay almost infants, though incapable of knowing the cause of so much sorrow, nevertheless sympathized in its effects, and cried for company, as they called out "Daddy Wilford's going away—kiss us, daddy. And don't stay long, and come back again, and I wont cry if you will," said a little girl who hung upon his gown as he patted her on the head, and endeavoured to disengage himself from her tiny hand.

But neither threats, nor exhortations, nor sorrow, could operate with old Gammer Plaise, so as to silence her tongue. She railed at Thornton, at Bonner, at Harpsfield, and at the Queen; and, as the Bishop of Dover passed her door, she once more shook her broom at him; and calling her dog, with many a hoot and hiss, endeavoured to set the animal about Thornton's heels, in the hope that it would bite him. A knot of idle boys had gathered themselves near her, to listen to her discourse, and to stare at what was going on; and, ever ready for mischief, they clapped their hands and encouraged the dog, which ran about Thornton, so as to avoid the blows aimed at its head by the Suffragan, who attempted to knock it down with his staff; and barked, snarled, and yelped; whilst the boys snatched up the stones that lay about, and fairly pelted Thornton, Cluny, and their attendants, with a shower of them, as they set forward and quitted the village of Wellminster.

CHAPTER IV

On the evening of that day which saw Owen Wilford removed from his house and his parishioners, in the cruel manner we have detailed in our last chapter, Rose and her faithful attendant, Abel Allen, completed their arrangements for securing such necessaries as might be found useful to Wilford, Alice, and themselves; as Thornton, something contrary to his general custom, had allowed of such things being removed. The greater part of these necessaries they bestowed for the time in the houses of some of the villagers, who were all eager in affording assistance to the unhappy and persecuted family; whilst Rose, knowing well the poverty of her humble friends, and fearing to bring them into trouble on her account, should she remain in any one of their dwellings, determined for the present to take up her lodging with an honest widow, the sister of Abel Allen, in Canterbury. There she would be near the prison of her parents; and she resolved, instead of giving way to her feelings, to make such exertions as she could to do them service; and hoped, by the daily labour of her hands (as she had much skill with her needle), to contribute her mite to their comforts, and to maintain herself, without being chargeable to her faithful but poor adherents.

All was now prepared. Old Abel clenched a stout oak staff, and offering his arm to his young Mistress to support her in her walk, proposed that they should set out for Canterbury before the night closed in upon them; and Thornton had threatened them both with imprisonment, if his orders were disobeyed, or if they were found to remain in the house on the following morning. This was a trying moment for poor Rose. She had lived from childhood in the house she was now to quit for the first time in her life, and to quit too under circumstances of such deep distress. Here she had lived in innocence and happiness; here she had seen her parents dwell together in peace and love for so many years. But now, when she looked around and saw all forsaken, the image of sorrow and desolation that was presented to her view, so much overpowered her, that, desirous to compose her feelings before she set out, she excused herself to old Allen, bidding him fetch

something from another part of the premises, and saying she would rejoin him in a short time, she retired into a little garden at the back of the house, to indulge her tears unobserved, and to endeavour to regain that fortitude she felt to be so necessary to her in this trying hour.

Not long after Rose had quitted the house, a stranger was observed to pass hastily through the village of Wellminster, and, without stopping a moment by the way, or noticing any thing in his progress, he came directly up the pathway that led to the mansion of the pastor. The stranger was a young man, of a tall and comely person; but his features expressed a character of thoughtfulness, that bordered upon melancholy. He was wrapped in a large black cloak of Geneva taffeta, and his brows were shaded by a broad-flapped hat of foreign fashion, entirely differing in form from the English close cap of the day. He had arms at his girdle, and in his hand such a light staff, or riding-rod, as it was usual with gentlemen to carry upon a journey.

"The stranger struck upon the door of Wilford's house with his staff, but no one answered this call for admission, for old Abel Allen was busied in an outhouse, where Rose had sent him to seek something, whilst she herself retired into the garden; and the other domestic, a female servant of Alice, was employed in removing her own apparel to a neighbour's cottage.

The stranger, finding that no one came to the door, laid his hand upon the latch, raised it, and without farther ceremony entered the house. He then walked into the kitchen, being the first apartment that lay open before him near the entry. It was deserted, and the kitchen chimney, whose well-piled hearth is the sure indication of good cheer, hospitality, and social feeling in an English country house, now presented an appearance the most cheerless. The fire was out, not even a fagot mouldering into embers lay upon the hearth. There was neither fire nor comfort to be found here: the stranger quitted the kitchen, and went directly to the oak parlour.

The oak parlour was also empty, and he started with surprise at the appearance of general confusion still visible from the ransacking and rummaging so lately made by Cluny and Miller. An empty flagon and a couple of tankards were seen upon the table, and a stool or two lay overturned upon the ground. A couple of large oak and carved arm-chairs stood, the one on this, the other on that side the chimney. In one of these, a dog, with its nose resting upon its hind-legs, lay

sleeping; but as the stranger approached, the dog started, and set up a fierce bark; in another moment, as if the animal recognised in this intruder an old acquaintance, it made one bound from the chair to the feet of the stranger, and leaped and danced about him,—now jumping so high as almost to reach his shoulder,—again, bending its head and stretching out its fore-paws, came fawning and crouching before him, and whined with impatience to be noticed and greeted in his turn.

"Poor Pincher!" said the stranger, as he patted the animal upon the head; "Poor Pincher! it is many a long day since we met, but you have not forgot me; and there is, I see, no friend save yourself to welcome me here."

The alarm that had been given by the dog reached the ears of old Abel Allen as he was coming towards the kitchen, and whilst the stranger was in the act of returning the caresses of the animal, Abel Allen stood before him. The stranger and the serving-man looked at each other in silence for a moment. The latter lifted up his hands and eyes, and at length so far recovered from his surprise as to exclaim, "Good heaven! is it you?"

"Yes," answered the stranger, "I believe I am still myself, though many things have happened that might have changed the nature of a better man since we last parted. But what means all this?" he continued, as he glanced his eye around, and pointed with his hand to the confusion of the room; "what does it mean? For heaven's sake, tell me, though I fear to ask it—where is my father? How fares my mother? and where is Rose?"

Abel shook his head, and wringing the youth by the hand, he said, "Don't ask me, don't ask me. I'll tell you all anon. But oh, my young master! my dear master Edward! what made you come back again in such times as these? Why did you not mind your father's counsel, and stay where you were? You can do him no good here, but only bring him into more trouble."

"I do not know what you mean," replied Edward; "but I can no longer endure this suspense. Tell me the worst at once; what has happened? Where are my parents?"

Abel remained silent. He hung down his head; he looked up and wiped his eyes.

"Tell me, for heaven's sake!" repeated Edward Wilford: "I can bear to hear it; indeed I can;—I can bear anything but this suspense."

"Your father is in prison," said old Abel: and he turned

aside his head, as if he would not witness the feelings of the unhappy son at hearing such intelligence.

Edward turned pale as death. "In prison!" he exclaimed; "where?—for what?"

"Thornton fetched him from us but this day," continued Abel; "so you may know all the rest without my speaking another word."

"Thornton! Thornton!" repeated Edward Wilford in great agitation; "O heaven! is that man my father's keeper? then he must fall—but I will bear it.—Go on, Abel; tell me the rest—you see I bear it; you see I do: I have not shed a tear." And Edward paced the room distractedly as he spoke, whilst his lips quivered and his bosom heaved in tumultuous agitation. "Where is my mother?—tell me where is my poor old mother?"

"That devil, Thornton," said Abel—and he struck his hand upon the table—"has taken her up for a harlot, and she is had to prison too."

"It is false!" exclaimed Edward—and the blood rushed into his face in a torrent as he spoke—"she is my father's chaste and honourable wife. Dares the villain thus assail the honour of my mother's name?"

"Ay, and he gives foul names to you and to your sister too," continued Allen: "he as good as said you were born *legitimate*, or some such Latin word, that the priests use when they mean to make out an honest man's children to be no better than bastards."

Wilford fired at hearing this, and clasping with his hand the haft of the short sword, or dagger, that he wore at his side, exclaimed in a voice rendered deep and impetuous by passion—"I will seek out Thornton, and if he is a man he shall answer this to me!"

Abel went up to him and laid his hands upon his shoulders, and endeavoured to soothe his young master as he said—"Don't now! don't be rash! Thornton is a priest, and there is no making him fight, you know; for the Pope has given him a shaven crown, and the devil shelters him under the hood that covers it. And think into what trouble you would bring yourself only to talk of fighting such a man! Dear Master Edward, think of your poor father and mother; it may be you may do them some good; but sure it would be wicked to make them more unhappy than they are just now. And besides, think of your sister, Mistress Rose, an innocent young thing as she is, and no father to care about her, nor mother

now to look after her, and nobody but you and me to comfort her. Do be chary of yourself, if it is only for the sake of your sister."

"Well, well," said Edward Wilford, "I will try to govern my feelings. I will be prudent. But when I hear Thornton's name, when I recollect all that he has done already, and may do hereafter, I am ready to burst with indignation at the thought of his villany. And where is my sister? But I need not ask; I suppose she shares in the common fate, and is in prison too."

"No, she is not; she is not, dear Master Edward," replied Allen; "she bears up her heart better than you do. She is just stepped into the garden, and I'll go to her and say that you are here, that you may not startle her as you did me just now, to see you come home so sudden, when we all thought you were at Frankfort. And do take a sample of her; for somehow or other, Master Edward, I don't know how it is, but you young men catch fire and speak hot words, and often kill each other in your quarrels; but women, though they cry oftener than we do, yet, after all, they bear up trouble with more patience and more heart than half of us men do. So I'll go and call Mistress Rose to you; and do pluck up your spirits, and don't look so sad when she comes."

Whilst Allen made this speech, Wilford stood fixed in thought, with his hand resting upon the back of a chair. He did not answer the old servant, but motioned him with his hand to go and do as he intended.

In a short time Allen returned, accompanied by his young mistress. Rose flew towards her brother, and in a moment they were locked in each other's arms. "My dear Edward," said she, "how glad I am to see you!—but how sorry I am you come at such a time as this!" And she wept, and kissed, and welcomed her brother by turns.

"And you, my dear sister, how glad I am indeed to see you!" said Edward; "and how you are grown, Rose! you are quite a woman now! But oh, my dear Rose! this is a sad, sad home to come to! Think of our parents. How shall I bear to meet them!"

"I do indeed think of them," replied Rose, "but I try to think what I may do for them; and it seems to me, my dear brother, that the best thing children can do for their parents in the hour of their trouble, is to comfort them, and for their sakes to hide, if they can, those feelings that will but add a fresh weight of sorrow to the burthen already laid upon them."

"You are right, Rose—quite right," said Edward; "you teach me what I ought to do; I will try to practise your lesson. But, tell me, how came this sad chance upon my father? For I conclude, by Thornton's taking him away, that he is accused of heresy."

"Ay, God help us! he is indeed," answered Rose. "I can tell you very little of the matter as it happened, though I am not without my own thoughts as to the cause of his arrest, but I would not tell my father; for you know how angry he used to be with me for suspicion, and would chide me if I spoke my mind when it was unfavourable to another."

"I know, Rose," said Wilford, "that before I left England you shewed some disposition to a freedom of remark on the character of others that our good father deemed uncharitable, and he took pains to crush the vice he feared in you, before it had gained strength by indulgence."

"I hope I am not uncharitable, brother," replied Rose, "in the present instance. But I am sure, whatever I may think of our cousin, Sir Francis Morgan, that his own behaviour will justify my worst thoughts; and I cannot help suspecting that Morgan is our father's enemy, and has been the stirrer of all this mischief."

"Tell me, what makes you think so?" inquired Wilford impatiently. "I know enough, too much of Morgan already," he added, as he sighed deeply. "But what interest could he have in harming our father, especially as, you know, he is nephew to our mother, her late sister's only son?"

"Morgan has never been near us," answered Rose, "since you left England. But, on the Sabbath before the last, I saw him in the church, when our father preached against the worshipping of Popish idols, and the uselessness of prayers for the dead, and other points of the Romish doctrine. I am sure that I saw Sir Francis Morgan making notes of the discourse. And did you ever know him make notes of a sermon—nay, did you ever know him go to hear a sermon for any good purpose?"

"You conclude then," said Wilford, "that it is Morgan who has stirred on Thornton to act against our father as he has done?"

"I do think he may have helped to do it," replied Rose; "though my father says Thornton has been his enemy ever since they lived together with Cranmer as his secretaries, when my father found out that Thornton had betrayed his master."

"I knew Morgan to be wild, extravagant, and selfish," said

Wilford; "but I never yet suspected him of being a bigot. Indeed, I thought he was of no religion, but conformed for his own safety to any worship of the times, without troubling himself about the faith of others. I cannot, therefore, see what good it could do him to hurt our father."

"Well, I may be mistaken," said Rose; "but now tell me why have you left Frankfort, when, not long since, my father wrote to bid you remain there for your own safety?"

"Did he so?" exclaimed Edward: "I have never received his letter. I cannot now enter into a full detail of particulars; but you know, I believe, that I have acted under letters of permission from the Emperor to pass and repass the seas. My own object, in making use of this permission, was to assist Master Boyer, of London, in his mercantile transactions. I did so; but at the same time I undertook the charge, hazardous enough had I been discovered, of conveying the bounty of the merchants of London, who in their hearts are of the reformed faith, to their suffering brothers, the exiles of Frankfort. A sad dissension has broken out amongst them on points of the Liturgy. Calvin and Knox are at variance. I grieve to say it, but our Church at Frankfort divided itself into parties; and those of Calvin's have banished Knox the Scot, on an absurd charge—that a book he wrote many years past was traitorous to the Emperor."

"My father will grieve to hear of these divisions," said Rose; "for he thinks that now, more than ever, the Reformed Church should be united in itself—but go on."

"In short," continued Edward, "what with party-spirit and dissensions, many of our exiles lost their foreign friends; and they are now in such want and affliction, that I offered to risk a journey into England, as well to obtain for them money and supplies, as to gain my father's opinion on some points of their disputes, in the hope to make peace; for they hold his instructions in great estimation, knowing him to have been the friend of Cranmer, and once a pastor at Frankfort. This is the cause of my once more putting my foot on English ground, for I had hoped never again to return."

"What can you mean by that, brother?" said Rose. "It is a most unkind speech. Surely, foreign parts and foreign friends cannot have made you so soon forget father, mother, sister, and country, that you should say you had hoped never to see them more."

"Forgive me, Rose," replied Edward; "I—I did not mean that. Forget you! do you think, Rose, that I could forget my

home and my family? God knows how I have remembered you all; how I have prayed for you, and that I might but once more see you all in England safe and happy, and secure in better times; and then I could have laid my head in my grave, and bid farewell to this world for ever! I have had many, many bitter remembrances of you all."

"Of us who love you so, Edward?" said Rose; "but I will not reproach you for saying so, because I see how it is. You are half heart-broken by these times. And then to come home worn with toil and travel, and to find such a chance as this is to welcome you—it is enough to make you say hasty and unkind words. So, kiss me, my dear brother, and do try to take comfort."

Wilford looked stedfastly in his sister's face, and kissed her with an affection the most sincere. "You are a dear girl, Rose," he said; "and I am a brother unworthy of you. I have not half requited your tenderness as it deserves. But I will be a brother, Rose; I will be kinder for the future;" and again he pressed her to his embrace.

Old Abel wiped his eyes; for, though he had been in the room during this discourse, he had respectfully forborne to interrupt it. "It glads my old heart to see this," said the faithful creature. "Oh, it is a blessed thing to live together in brotherly love. My children," continued he, as he came up to them and took the hand of each, "do not think a poor man too free, if he gives you counsel. I have seen the birth of you both. I remember you, Master Edward, when you were a stout cherry-cheeked boy, as gamesome as a young lamb; and you would follow after Abel Allen, and get him to play with you at blind hob half the livelong day. And you, Mistress Rose, were of a less frolicsome mood. You loved, when you were a little girl scarce a foot high—you loved to sit on my knee and to hear me tell you old tales about the things I had seen when I was young, and specially about the coronation of the Lady Ann Boleyn; and you would then dress you up in your mother's paafts and frows, and would play Lady Ann about the house like a little queen. But you wept when I told you of her sore fate; and I loved you for being a tender-hearted child."

These reminiscences of former days, for a moment, led old Abel from the theme of his discourse; else he was not very garrulous at any time. However, he returned to his subject. "I love to call up past days," said Abel, "because I think we should do so when they have been happy ones; and to

thank God for them in those seasons when He pleases to give us darker hours. But what I would say is this, my children: there are but two of you, brother and sister—you are babes of the same parents. You have hung at the same breast, when you were as poor and as helpless as a bird just fledged. I have seen you sleeping together, fast locked in each other's arms when you were infants; and God's angels stood and kept watch by your bed. You have knelt and prayed together in the same faith; you have a father common to you both. Have then but one interest—one heart. Be true, kind, and comfortable to one another, in the day of your trouble; and the blessing of that God, who delights in the love of His servants, shall be upon you both."

The brother and sister were sensibly affected at this feeling admonition from their old and faithful servant; and they both assured him, they would never forget his instructions. Rose, whose eyes had scarcely wandered from her brother since he came into the house, now remarked, that she thought he was altered a good deal since he had last left England. "You are much browner in the face than you used to be, Edward," said she, "though I do not mind that; but you have lost your colour, and you have such a sad fixed look, that it seems as if it were habitual to you, and not alone owing to what has so lately happened."

Wilford pleaded fatigue and anxiety of mind.

"I will get you some refreshment; I'll go and tap the fresh cask of ale," said Abel Allen, "and I hope you will drink as much as you can, for it would be a pity to leave it all, as we must do, for that Spanish friar, John de Villa Garcina, as they call him, to guzzle and drink healths to the Pope in it."

"What! Friar John de Villa Garcina!" exclaimed Edward, "is he to succeed my father here in Wellminster."

"He is to do so for the time being," replied Rose.

"He is one of the most artful of all the Jesuits," said Wilford, "that King Philip brought over with him from Spain; and he it was who was set upon Cranmer to make him sign his recantation. Must he succeed our father?"

Rose sighed as she answered "Yes." Abel Allen returned with some refreshment for his young master. "I have tasted nothing since I came on shore at Dover," said Edward; "I would not rest a moment on the road, so anxious was I to reach home. I left my horse in Canterbury, that I might come hither in private, by crossing the fields. I have reached what I hoped to find my home; but, alas! how do I find it!"

Rose and Allen were silent; and observing the pale and sad looks of Edward Wilford, they pressed him to take food and drink. He partook but slightly of either. "Why, you have hardly tasted the ale," said Abel, "and I thought you would have liked it; for I brewed it myself, not thinking it would come to a Spanish friar's mouth. But so it is; we labour and toil, and, as the Scripture says, lay up goods, but know not who shall gather them. Do taste another cup."

"No, no more," replied Wilford; "I have no appetite—I have no relish for it. I am quite out of heart." And rising from his seat, Edward paced the room, till, coming near the door, he stood still, and looking with fixed attention at the arm-chair by the chimney side, he burst into a flood of tears.

"Don't look at that," said Allen; "I see what you are thinking of."

"And there," said Wilford pointing to the chair—"there he used to sit: I think I see him now, with his venerable white hairs and his mild and manly face, as he would sit and read the Bible to us, Rose. And now I look and find but his empty place. Heaven give me patience!—This is too much."

"Don't, don't talk so," said old Abel. "You have set Mistress Rose a-crying. Come, we must go at last. So, do let us think of leaving the house."

"Leave the house!" exclaimed Wilford. "Must my sister be turned out of our father's house?"

"You forget," replied Rose, "that I told you Friar John de Villa Garcina is to take possession of the cure; and this, you know, is but the house appointed for the parish minister."

"True, true," said Wilford; "I remember it too well: and where are you going, Rose? where will you find a home?"

"God will not forsake me, brother," answered Rose cheerfully; though I grant it is a heavy pass for me. I have no friends of any consequence in this neighbourhood, and I fear to bring my poor ones into trouble on my account; so I intend to lodge me for the present with good Widow Littlewit, this honest man's sister; and perhaps, Edward, she may have a bed to spare for you; for since she has been a poor widow, she chiefly lives by what she can make of her lodgings."

"I will warrant she will find a bed for Master Edward," said Abel Allen; "and I don't know where I am to rest; but I and Pincher will find a bed somewhere. We are both old servants of the family, and we will neither of us stay behind to serve a Spanish friar, nor desert our masters in their distress; and Pincher, I am sure, is no friend to the Pope, or the friars,

but as faithful a dog as ever wagged a tail." Pincher seemed conscious of the eulogium Abel bestowed upon him, for he looked up in his master's face, and wagged his tail, as if he assented to the proposition.

Edward Wilford now summoned up all his fortitude, and prepared to conduct his sister to Canterbury. "I will see my father; I will see him to-night: so, be of good cheer, Rose, and let us trust in God, and endeavour to practise the duty of submission."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Rose; "for I am sure Edward, that our father always taught us that the passive virtues (of all other virtues the most useful in life), when they are founded on humility, were the most acceptable to Heaven."

"You may not see your father to-night, my dear young master," said Abel; "for by the time we reach Canterbury it will be dark, and past the hour for opening the Castle gates. In the morning you may see him."

"Well, then," replied Edward, "I must be patient, and wait till morning comes. Abel," continued Wilford, as they were leaving the house, "do not let us pass through the village, in our way to the high-road; I am too much disordered to meet my father's old parishioners this evening, and being with Rose and you, I shall certainly be recognised."

"We will take the short cut, then," said Abel Allen, "and go down the green lane, and so through Sir Richard Southwell's wood, and that will bring us out near the main road to Canterbury."

"Must we go that way?" inquired Wilford; "I thought there used to be another path over the common?"

"Ay, but that way is enclosed now," said Abel, "since the great alterations that have been made here, now Sir Richard is come to live at home, and doesn't go staying abroad for years at a time, as he used to do in the late King's days. So we must go through Sir Richard Southwell's property."

"Does Sir Richard Southwell constantly live here now?" inquired Wilford. "Is he well? and—and is his family all well?"

"They are all well," replied Abel, "and Lady Southwell is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Wilford; "Lady Southwell dead—dead—I—I am much grieved to hear it. When did she die? when did it happen? Was she here, or in London? Is Sir Richard here now?"

"Bless my heart, Master Edward," said Abel, "I can't

answer such a number of questions in a minute; and I don't know much about the matter? All I know is, that Lady Southwell died at Wellminster-hall about a year ago; that Sir Richard took on, people said, very much about it, but comforted his heart by paying a score of priests to sing for her soul every day: that ever since her death, a Spanish friar lives in his house, to keep up his spirits, as I suppose; and Sir Richard is sometimes at Whitehall along with the Queen, and sometimes here in the country, and that's all we know about them. But, bless me! dear Master Edward, only to see now, how travel and strange parts make a man forget himself. Why, you said just now that you did not wish to go through the village; and see if you be not turning down the very path that leads to it."

"I had forgot," said Wilford; "do you lead on. Come, Rose, take my arm; why do you stop?"

"Only to pluck a flower from this rosebush," replied his sister; "my poor mother planted the tree with her own hand. What a changed place will this be!" and a tear stole down the cheek of Rose as she spoke. "I believe I am very fond and foolish," added she; "but, notwithstanding all our troubles, I cannot leave the old house, and the garden, and all these inanimate things, without feeling as if I loved them the more now that I part from them, perhaps for ever, brother; and perhaps I shall never more see such happy days as I have known here."

"Dear young mistress," said Abel, "a man's happiness, and, I take it, a woman's also, lies most in his own breast; and God can make any place a temple for His blessed Spirit. So, don't think happiness depends so much upon place; for it's all in the heart. Though, I grant, there is not a better spot for grazing sheep and breeding cattle in all the county than Wellminster; and we grew our own hops too, from which I brewed the ale. But God's will be done! He gave those blessings, and He takes them away—for sheep, cattle, hops, and ale, are all His,—and who shall say him nay?"

Rose assented to this sound reasoning of poor old Allen; and taking her brother by the arm, the little party set forward to Canterbury. Abel Allen led the van, armed with a strong oaken staff, from which depended a bundle of necessaries, as he carried it over his shoulder; and Pincher followed close at his heels, as the guardian, friend, and companion of the trusty servant.

The evening drew on apace; and long before they reached

the city of Canterbury, the higher tower of its beautiful cathedral, its massive walls and many turrets, were silvered by the moon, that rode tranquilly through the heavens as she shed her light upon this lower world, undisturbed by the passions of men, and still proclaiming in her course the power, the wonder, and the glory of that God, who, excellent in all the works of His creation, is alone represented cruel and unrelenting by the bigotry and superstition of man.

CHAPTER V

We must now return to the elder Wilford, whom, it must be remembered, in the chapter before the last, we left under the guidance of Thornton, Cluny, and the attendants of the Commission, on his way to prison, upon a charge of heresy. Thornton, who was already sufficiently satisfied with the share of odium and abuse he had incurred in the village for being the instrument of Wilford's accusation, had no mind to try how he might be received in the same capacity by the populace of Canterbury; since, however retired Wilford had lived, his cure was too near that city to allow the worth of his character to be unknown to many of the inhabitants; and his having once been a favoured secretary with Archbishop Cranmer, was a circumstance that had of late contributed to interest many persons in his behalf. These considerations, therefore, induced Thornton, who (like most persons that commit acts of cruelty) was very chary of his own safety, to leave Wilford before he reached the city gates; and having charged Cluny to see the prisoner safely deposited in the appointed place, the worthy Suffragan, it was said, hastened home as fast as he could, to solace himself over the luxuries of a well-spread table, and, as he drank his goblet of wine, to devise new schemes for the glory of the Queen, by the extirpation of heresy within her realms.

Canterbury Castle, to which Wilford was to be conducted (perhaps, at the present time, scarcely a vestige of it remains), was a stately pile of Norman structure. Many a siege had assailed its massive and weather-beaten walls in vain. At the period of our narrative, though some of the outer barriers bore evidence of these contests, and looked, hung about with their mantle of ivy, as if the period of their decay was not far distant; yet the inner court, the towers, and the keep, still reared their heads in bold defiance, like giants in strength, threatening ruin to whomsoever might become their assailants. The gateway was perfect, defended on either side by a flanking round tower of ponderous construction, with many a narrow window, and many a hollow loophole in its sides, like the eyes

of Death, and whence he had often launched the darts of destruction. These towers had stood the test of ages: they had witnessed the changes of government, of laws, of religion, and of generations. And, whilst time had long since numbered the men of their days with the "years beyond the flood," they still rose to the view in solemn grandeur, like the character of their hardy founders in the pages that record their deeds.

The great oaken gates, thickly studded with nails, were closed, nor did they now open to give entrance to the prisoner; but a small door, cut within the gates, and called the wicket, was unbolted, unlocked, and unchained, to admit Cluny and his charge. Wilford passed through with a firm step, and now found himself beneath the huge dark archway that formed the interior of the gateway. Here he was met by the keeper of the prison—a man who was a terror to, and the theme of malediction with, every unfortunate wretch placed within his dominion of cruelty and death.

He was a tall, raw-boned fellow, of a stern and ruthless countenance, and had been appointed to his situation in consequence of the fierce bigotry of his character. He joyed to see a heretic come within his power. His person altogether presented what the imagination of the timid sufferer could picture to itself as most terrible; he rivalled even William Alexander himself, the famous keeper of Newgate in Mary's days, and seemed to vie with him which should prove most unrelenting—the savage master of the Metropolitan prison, or that of Canterbury castle.

The keeper looked at Wilford for a moment, in order to become perfectly well acquainted with his features; and seeing, by the habit the good pastor wore, that he was a churchman, the fellow gave a sneer, but expressed no surprise, and appeared in a moment to comprehend the whole affair. He did not deign to ask so much as a single question respecting his prisoner, but simply demanded of Cluny the warrant of committal.

"That shall be tendered anon," said Cluny; "in the mean time, do you, Master Keeper, please to suffer me to speak to you apart, as I have that for your private ear which may not be spoken here."

The keeper motioned Cluny to follow him into a small apartment in the tower of the gateway; and, for the present, Wilford and Alice were conducted by the billmen into the inner court, or open space of the castle, surrounded by high walls and massive towers. Here all the prisoners were suffered

to breathe the air during certain hours of the day, and it was now the time for this indulgence. Upon entering the inner court, a strange and mixed scene presented itself to Wilford. There was an assembly of persons apparently of all orders and grades in society. Some were the victims of guilt, others of tyranny. Here might be seen the squalid, ragged, and the miserable; the cut-purse, the midnight burglar, the cheat, the maker of false moneys, the beggar, and the common thief.

Many appeared wholly senseless of, or indifferent to, their condition; others seemed to brave it out, and to rejoice in the very acts or talents that had consigned them to a prison. A few of the poor debtors were busily employed in such little occupations as they could here follow, in the hope to gain a trifle to better their condition, whilst some of the idle and vicious part of their fellow-prisoners, from mere wantonness, endeavoured, by sundry tricks and annoyances, to interrupt the progress of their work. In one part of the court-yard, four or five men were amusing themselves in the game of jumping or leaping at the ring, accompanying their amusement with loud shouts and exclamations, according to the success or failure of the jumper. Another group of savage-looking fellows had collected themselves together, and were drawing straws for the cost of a flagon of beer.

In one corner, something apart from the rest, sat two persons of an extraordinary appearance, who amused themselves with playing a game at cards, that seemed deeply to interest them both. The younger player, in his dress exhibited a mixture of threadbare finery and dirty indigence. The gold lace that faced his doublet was tarnished, and the velvet of his cloak faded and worn—many a point was broken, and his hose shewed the skin of the wearer through more than one hole. But the beard, cut and knotted into two formal peaks, with a small velvet cap, from which depended a broken plume, set shantily on one side of the head, proclaimed an affectation of the fashion of Whitehall.

This sorry and broken-down beau, was engaged in play with an old fellow, whose beard, white, long, and flowing, would have seemed venerable, but for the shrewd and knavish cast of the features to which it belonged. The old man was dressed in a large black gown, his middle girt about with a broad leathern belt, from which depended a rosary and a cross. Near these card-players stood a little, fat, stout fellow, whose only employment seemed to be the delight he took in disturbing the game, by singing, as loud as he could bawl, a ditty that appeared to be particularly disagreeable to the old

man's ears, as from time to time he begged the singer to desist.

One man, heavily ironed, whose fetters clanked in time to the motion of his feet, was seen pacing up and down the court-yard alone; his beard and hair hanging wild and matted, his clothes retaining in no part their original colour, and so tattered as to leave bare his sinewy arms and legs; whilst his countenance exhibiting an expression of the most reckless brutality, he gazed about him with the utmost indifference, as if wholly insensible to his condition. This man was charged with the crime of murder.

Apart from all the rest, shunned by all, and even by the murderer, appeared a group of persons both male and female, whose sober appearance and quiet deportment, together with an air of composure and resignation strongly depicted in the countenance of each, at once proclaimed that their only crime was the result of conscience. These were accused of heresy.

Wilford and Alice, who had not yet been separated, though they were both in custody, now conversed together, and the former endeavoured, by every argument that religion or affection could suggest, to arm her mind with firmness against the day of her calamity. Whilst Wilford was speaking to Alice, a man with a very red face, and habited meanly in a doublet and hose of rusty black, who had a cross suspended from his neck, and an inkhorn from the button, came up, and saluted the good pastor with an air of familiarity, assuring him that he was very glad to see him. Wilford returned this salutation with cold civility.

"Master Parson," said the man, "for I see by your gown you are one, you need not stand off so shy, like a game-cock that won't fight; we are all fellows here, and crow alike on the same perch, and so I mean nothing but in a civil and a friendly way, and you had better receive me well."

"Heaven forbid," replied Wilford, "that I should receive the good intentions of any man otherwise; but as you are a total stranger to me, I am at a loss to know how I can be particularly indebted to you for friendship, except, indeed, it be that friendly desire for mutual good offices one prisoner should entertain towards another."

"There you are out again, Master Parson," said the intruder. "I bless our Lady that I am no prisoner here, but one who acts in the way of business for the prisoners. My name is Timothy Cutt, a scrivener by profession. I write letters, appeals, and make out *alibis* and cases for those who cannot write themselves. In short, though no attorney, I often do just as

well for prisoners as if they put themselves into the hands of one of the law, to have their feathers plucked off, and nothing left but the bare bones; and seeing how it is with you, Master Parson, for I guess you are in here for a fagot and a roast," (continued the scrivener, smiling at the pleasantness of his own conceit), "I thought, perhaps, you might lack a help of my function—a touch of my pen."

"I thank you, but I can write myself," replied Wilford, "and indite somewhat too, I hope; it would be else no small shame to the gown I have so long worn."

"No shame at all, if you could not tell great A from little b," continued Cutt; "for many of our priests can say or sing by rote very well; but once put them out, or give them their missal book to put them in, and St. Benedict bless them! they cannot find the right place; they are as completely foundered as an old horse that has broken down in the course. I have written many things, and good and quaint devices, to help many a priest out of a strait, and especially one of Augustine's monks, who was taken up on a charge of making angels for King Edward without a legal power to canonize them. And I have as good skill as any man in Canterbury at writing a recantation for a heretic, or to help him to a last speech at a burning. In short, I serve all people in an honest way for one groat per sheet, and find paper into the bargain."

"I thank you," answered Wilford, "but I do not need your services."

"Perhaps," continued the importunate scrivener, "you may doubt my skill, or the truth of what I say. But only ask that old gentleman, with the long white beard, who is playing at cards; ask him, if I have not done him many a good service by my pen."

"Do not appeal to me, Timothy," replied the white-bearded card-player; "I need no man's aid at inditing: though I allow you copied out a statement for me, to assist in shewing my innocence in an awkward affair."

"Was that all I did for you, old whitelocks?" cried Timothy. "Why now, that's what I call gratitude! Why, you lying old rascal, was not I the man to bring you through three several committals for perjury; and sundry other offences; but you have no more gratitude than a thief. You are an old sinner, Jemmy Jenkins, and you can't deny a word of what I have said about you; for all the prison knows that you would have been hanged long ago if it had not been for my helps, sinner as you are."

"The sins of my youth have been long since repented of,"

said the old card-player, "and I have laid out the savings of my industry to purchase pardons, absolutions, and indulgences, enough to clean any man's conscience, and to carry him to heaven; and I daily bless his Holiness for granting me such comforts for my money. To go on with our game; let me see—where was I?—making or marring?"

"What's that you say?" said Cluny, who at this moment was passing near the card-players in his way towards the spot where Wilford stood. "What are those fellows p'aying at?"

"Black and White, or Making and Marring,"* replied the singer."

No sooner did Cluny hear this, than he pounced upon both cards and card-players, something in the same way as a cat pounces upon and holds within her claws an unlucky mouse chased into a corner. "I seize them, I seize the cards in the Queen's name," cried Cluny: "you are taken in the fact, playing an unlawful and prohibited game, put down by act of parliament in the third of the present reign. I shall seize the stakes too: the statute will bear me out, since moneys wagered at an unlawful game come under the penalty of the law."

Whilst Cluny was thus exclaiming against an unlawful game, and pocketing both the cards and the money staked down, the old man with the white beard got up, and now that he was on his legs, he looked so wretched and meagre, that his appearance was more like that of a figure cut down from a gibbet than a living creature. "Thomas Cluny," said he, addressing the attorney, "I fancy that you have forgot me; for now-a-days so ungracious is this world grown, that men are apt to forget their best friends—but I pray you, for the sake of former acquaintance, not to be too hard upon an old man for practising an innocent pastime to beguile the cares of his conscience." This speech was pronounced aloud; but Jemmy Jenkins had another for the private ear of the attorney; and drawing him a little aside, he added in a whisper, "Cluny, we know one another—sweep the stakes, if you will be content with that; but don't pocket the cards. I have a pigeon here who has a few feathers left for my plucking—you shall have a quill of the rifle. So do leave the cards for my use, and you know by experience that I am not a dry-fisted fellow to a friend."

* Black and White, or Making and Marring, was put down by Act of Parliament in the third year of Queen Mary's reign, as well as sundry other games considered injurious to the morals of the people.

Cluny winked his eye, and nodded his head, laid his fore-finger upon his nose, and said softly, "Don't ask for the cards; but here, you old dog, put your paw into my pocket; pick it, pick 'em out yourself; it's not the first time you've done that in your life, you know. Quick, quick, I say; you have not surely forgot the trick of Paul's Cross, to hear a sermon and filch the auditors as they stand staring at the preacher."

Jemmy Jenkins looked intelligence, as Cluny suffered the old rogue to pick his pocket of the cards in a most professional manner; and he forthwith returned to strip the miserable man of fashion of his last penny, according to the promise made to the attorney. Cluny's power was indeed great in Canterbury Castle. There was no one, innocent or guilty, whom, somehow or other, he did not manage to bring within his toils. He was like a busy spider in his web, ready and watching to snap up and to entangle each unwary fly which might chance but to brush its wing within the intricate maze framed by its ingenious enemy. With prisoners who had no money to pay certain fees of office, Cluny was very severe; but to others, who dropped a little coin in his path, Cluny was very merciful —overlooking their transgressions, and granting them indulgences, and treating their offences in a manner the most perfectly oblivious.

Cluny now joined the keeper of the prison, and came forward to give orders for locking up and securing the persons of the new prisoners. Alice and her husband were separated to be confined in opposite parts of the Castle. Wilford ventured to inquire if he might be permitted to see his daughter and his servant, Abel Allen, during his confinement. No counter order had been issued by the Suffragan of Dover, so that this request was not denied; but it was not extended to any other than the two above-named persons, Abel and Rose.

Wilford rejoiced to find that he should at least be allowed one indulgence thus dear to his heart, and did not press upon his enemies any more questions; nay, so indifferent was he to his own personal comforts, that he actually forgot to ask in what part of the Castle he was to be confined. Soon after, he bade a last farewell to Alice, and was conducted to his cell in a frame of mind so composed and resigned to his fate, so fully conscious his sufferings were the dispensations of heaven, that he seemed already to soar in spirit to that world, where neither malice, bigotry, nor superstition, can reach the soul they so gladly would consign to the greatest misery here on earth.

CHAPTER VI.

On the morrow, Rose and Allen were busily employed in making some necessary arrangement, not only with a view to their present accommodation at the house of Widow Littlewit, but also in the hope of affording some comforts to Wilford and Alice in their prison. Whilst they were thus occupied, Edward set out with the intent to visit his parents in Canterbury Castle; but as he was seen soon after to pass out of the city by Westgate, it appeared he had not yet been able to gratify the wish of his heart in obtaining such an interview.

Edward Wilford walked on towards the same road he had traversed on the preceding evening with his sister and Abel Allen, and he had nearly gained the wood belonging to Sir Richard Southwell, through which they had passed, before he perceived that old Abel's trusty Pincher was at his heels. When the heart is sorely oppressed, and the mind harassed by anxious thoughts, we often feel wholly indifferent to those things which, in happier moments, afford us a source of innocent delight. So was it now with Wilford; for, as the dog jumped and played about him, far from being pleased by its caresses, he repelled them, and attempted to drive Pincher back again. The faithful animal, that seemed sensible of his unkindness, hung down his ears; but, instead of retreating, stood at a little distance, as if determined to follow Wilford when he should move onward. "Alas!" said Edward, "why should I drive the poor creature back, and treat him as the world has treated me? I have not so many friends, that I should dispense with one of the most faithful." And repenting what he had done, he called the animal by its name, and the dog instantly sprang forward, rejoicing to find that he was again taken into favour.

Wilford pursued his walk; and the melancholy of his mood seemed to nourish itself by the sight of those very objects that supplied a fresh source of mournful contemplation. Once more he was wandering amidst scenery that a few years before was familiar to him, and where, in happier hours, he had delighted to roam, as he pictured forth, with the vivacity of youth, those hopes of futurity that are raised by the imagina-

tion to captivate the heart and to keep alive expectation—hopes that are so often lost and withered amid the sad realities of human life.

The morning was fine, and had in it a freshness which gives to beauty itself an added charm. The trees grew thick around, stretching their long arms over the pathway, and glittering with dew. There was an opening purposely cut through some of them, in order to afford that burst of view so strikingly beautiful when we suddenly come upon it from out the deep shade and intricacy of a forest. From this spot was seen, as through a window, the valley in which was situated the family mansion of Sir Richard Southwell.

The valley was of a character so peculiar to the county of Kent: it was rich, varied, and cultivated. The house had been erected about the time of Henry the Seventh. The gateway which led into the inner court was flanked by two elevated towers with battlements around their tops; and near this entrance was seen a small Gothic chapel, a frequent accompaniment to the houses of the English nobility and gentry of the period. Not far from the chapel, a still and transparent lake spread itself like a vast mirror to a considerable distance, reflecting upon the deep blue of its waters every fretted window and rising pinnacle of the Gothic pile. Beyond the lake arose a gentle eminence, clothed with a thick wood, where many an oak and elm that had grown old as they stood, like the guardians of the forest, reared their bald heads and scathed arms far above every surrounding object. A herd of deer was seen to stray under their broad shadows, whilst some of these dappled "burghers of the wood" were slaking their thirst on the margin of the lake, as the sun shone bright upon their "velvet coats" and branching antlers. An extensive lawn that lay in front of the house, swept sloping down to the very verge of a rivulet that supplied the waters of the lake; and at some distance was seen the river Stour, as it meandered and watered in its course the little village of Wellminster.

Wilford stopped a moment whilst he contemplated this prospect. Every object had a tongue which spoke in thrilling accents to his heart. Overcome by the painful images that were thus called up in his own mind, he hastily turned away, and striking down another path that led towards the outlet of the wood, walked quickly on, as if fearful of again trusting himself to his own reflections. At length he came to a spot where an oak tree, whose age was only estimated by conjec-

ture, since some averred it to be more than five hundred years old, stood alone, like the lord and founder of the forest. The branches that covered the top were entirely bare; towards the centre a few boughs were still clothed with their mantle of foliage; and the trunk of the tree, riven and entirely hollow, now contained a seat for the passenger within its antiquated and natural recess. Wilford remembered the old tree as a familiar friend; and throwing himself upon the seat, paused for a moment to give vent to those feelings he could no longer subdue. Whilst he sat fixed in thought, he heard the bark of the dog, that had run on before; and a slight rustling among the leaves assured him some one was approaching. He instantly arose, and turning towards the pathway, suddenly encountered a young lady, who appeared to be leisurely walking through the wood.

Edward instantly recognised her, and exclaimed in a voice deep and tremulous with emotion, "Arabella!"

The lady looked up in his face as he pronounced her name, and uttered an involuntary shriek of terror as she endeavoured to pass forward. Wilford caught her by the gown, and cried aloud, "Stay, I conjure you; I command you, stay!" in such an emphatic manner, and with looks so wild, yet so expressive of a determined purpose, that the lady stood irresolute--reluctant, as it seemed, to remain, yet fearful to depart.

"Good heaven!" exclaimed Edward Wilford; "is it come to this pass, that you would shun me as if I were a thing the most abhorred, the greatest stranger to you upon the face of the whole earth? Look at me, Arabella; can you, dare you forget me, in the sight of God and man?"

The young lady, whose person and countenance were of the greatest beauty, looked down upon the ground. She remained silent; but her colour changed from red to white, and every nerve in her body seemed to shake like the aspen quivering in the wind.

"Look at me, Arabella! Speak to me, I beseech you!" continued Wilford. "Who am I? Can your heart deny me, though your tongue refuses to acknowledge me? In the sight of God, by the sacred compact sealed in His name, am I not your husband?"

"No, no," said the lady; "the ceremony of the Church was never solemnized, and the compact is void by——"

"Wretched, miserable subterfuge!" exclaimed Edward indignantly. "Is it because a mere ceremony was wanting that the most sacred vows must be void—a compact given by

your own consent, and sanctioned by the authority of the only natural guardian you then possessed? Oh, Arabella! can I bear to think that you, you whom I delighted to fancy the image of all that is good and perfect here on earth, can thus abuse, play with, and trample under foot the laws of God and man, the inviolable engagements of honour and affection?"

The lady seemed greatly distressed by this appeal. The tears burst from her eyes, and fell fast down her cheeks, as she said, "Why do you reproach me? You know it was my father."

"Your father can have no power to set aside those common ties of justice and humanity that bind one creature to another —and why am I thus used? why was I cast off? Am I alone to suffer by a man whose name stands with the world as the example of all that is worthy?"

"You know—you cannot forget the cause," said Arabella: "My father has insisted that faith cannot——"

"Cannot be kept with me!" said Edward Wilford, interrupting her; "because I am what he esteems a heretic! Think, Arabella, what I have suffered for your sake, and for your mother's too. Lady Southwell, with whose death I but lately became acquainted, was in early life, what Sir Richard now terms me, heretical; and, however she might be prevailed with afterwards to change her faith, her heart was ever inclined to the Reformers. Think how I have been used, encouraged, flattered, my affection for you nursed and fanned into life, till even habit itself made that affection a second life to me. Your father was absent, it is true, in foreign parts; but your mother led me to think that he would approve our mutual love; even the contract was drawn between us;* I thought you mine—mine in the sight of God! And then what followed? think of that!"

"My father returned from the embassy he had so long entertained in France," said Arabella; "and learning from your own lips, your firm belief in the new doctrines, he banished you his house for ever; and angered as he was with my poor mother for her weakness, threatened her, if she sanctioned your pursuit of me, to part from her also for ever."

"And to save her," replied Edward,—"for she was worn in mind and body with these wretched times—to save her, I consented to absent myself from the kingdom. But never, Arabella, never did I renounce the compact that is between

* At the period of our narrative, a written contract of marriage generally passed between persons of family and fortune, before the performance of the ceremony. It was held almost as sacred and as binding as marriage.

us. Your mother is now at peace; she is dead; she can no longer suffer by your father's stern and fearful opinions; and I hold you still as mine, as my affianced wife, by your own act and will."

Arabella clasped her hands together, and, looking up imploringly in Wilford's face, she said, "Oh, do not, do not think of me; for if you do, my father may be your ruin. He is in all things a merciful, a good man; but where his religion is at stake—where the welfare, as he would deem it, of my soul is concerned, there is nothing but he would do to save me."

"Arabella," said Wilford, "that I now renew my claim, must convince you I am reckless of my own safety. Whilst your mother lived, there was a bond in honour that would have held me apart from you even had her years been extended to the extreme verge of old age, since I would not sacrifice her to the tyranny of your bigoted father. But were you once mine, I would assert a husband's right; and Sir Richard, though your father, should never enslave either your mind or your body. You are bound to me by your own act, and I will never cancel that bond."

"Can you, can you wish to hold me by it!" exclaimed Arabella, "when you know what would be the inevitable consequence of its fulfilment?"

"You mistake me, I fear—sadly mistake me, Arabella," said the young man. "I would despise that bond without the heart that gave it. No, Arabella, though to part with you for ever would give me a deeper pang than all the cruelties your father might enforce against me, yet, did I but think you had forgotten me, I would as freely break the tie that binds you to me, as I could tear asunder this light web of the spider that hangs across our path—I want no ties without affection."

Arabella wept, and only repeated the name of her father, her fears of her father. Wilford continued—"But I know you have not, you could not forget me, Arabella. We were playmates in childhood, before we knew anything of those wretched discords that arose by the folly of man, from a religion that was sent as the bond of peace and love."

"My mother was good, virtuous, and pious," said Arabella, "and condemned none who obeyed the laws of God in their actions, however they might differ on some points of doctrine."

"And she," replied Wilford, "delighted to see our growing love. She first bid me hope to win you. Think of the days, the years, that I have lived but for you; and then ask your own heart, if you could, if you ought to forget me, and, in

requital for all my honest affection, to cast me off to the wide world, where, heaven help me! I could not find one hope of happiness or peace."

"You must not say so," said Arabella. "Think how dear you are to your family, and how much they look to you as the support of their declining years. We never meet them now; but I know they do so. Only look to them."

"Look to them!" exclaimed Wilford, in great agitation, "and where shall I find them? In a prison—deserted, accused, driven from their peaceful home; their grey hairs held up as a theme for mockery and scorn, and their lives endangered by the cruel followers of your father's faith."

"Alas, alas!" said Arabella, "I never heard of this. When did it happen?—where are they?—can I do them good?—can my father?"

"I am now about to seek your father on their account," replied Wilford. "Whatever may be my determination concerning you, Arabella, I did not now come to seek you, or to plead to you for the fulfilment of your promise. No, though I were to lose you for ever, I could not, for a moment, when my father lies in prison and in danger of his life, bestow so much care on any hope, however dear to my heart, but what concerns his safety. I was going to your father when I met you."

"For what purpose?" inquired Arabella. "My father is now engaged with his confessor, and he will not leave his oratory for some time to come. On no consideration would he be disturbed whilst he is so engaged. You may not see him for this hour."

"Then," said Wilford, "I will pass the time that is so unexpectedly given to me with you. My business with your father will be brief. I visited Canterbury Castle this morning with a view to gain access to my father, for I have not yet seen him, as I returned but last night from abroad. I was denied admission at the prison-gates, and the keeper told me that I could not enter them unless I procured an order to do so either from the Suffragan of Dover, or from Sir Richard Southwell, the high-sheriff of the county. I could not ask Thornton, for he but last night arrested my father. I should have forgot myself had I seen him, and might have injured my father by the violence of my own feelings towards his oppressor. To meet Sir Richard Southwell, my own enemy, is evil enough; but I choose it as the least; and from him I must solicit the admission to see my parents in their affliction."

"I am sure," said Arabella, "I think he will not deny you request; but do not, I beseech you, for your own sake—do nc name me to him."

"I shall not purposely do so," replied Wilford, "but I can not answer for what circumstances may occasion me to men tion or to withhold."

"Do not name the contract," said Arabella, "since m father considers it for ever annulled by the Cardinal's decre to render it void."

"Does he consider it annulled?" repeated Wilford indig nantly. "It is not annulled by me, at least; and I am som party concerned, I believe; and that he should find, if m poor father were but once in safety. No Cardinal nor Pop can abrogate a solemn vow made in the name of God. Still I repeat it, all lies in your own power: speak but sincerely Arabella; will you dare to speak the truth to me?" Wilfor took her hand, and as he pressed it to his lips, the tears stoo in his eyes, and he said, in accents of the tenderest affection "How long, how ardently I have loved, God only knows He has seen all that I have suffered for your sake, and I woul only ask you now to requite me with sincerity. My heart i nearly broken; do not you finish the work by a cruelty I hav not deserved."

"What can I say?" said Arabella. "What would you hav me do? Must I become the means of involving you in dange —perhaps in ruin?"

"Tell me, Arabella," continued Wilford, in a solemn voice —"tell me, in the name of Him who knows the secrets of al hearts, in whose presence we now stand, and to whom we mus both answer at the dreadful day of retribution,—tell me, wa that engagement the free act of your own will?"

Arabella, thus solemnly addressed by Edward, could n longer hesitate, and she replied, "Yes, it was," in a firm an emphatic manner.

"Did you renounce it," continued Wilford, "by your own will, or solely by the command of your father?"

"It was my father," answered Arabella, "who obliged me t renounce it. I obeyed from fear."

"And your heart is still mine?" said Edward; "I know i is. These moments—this very anxiety to give me up, in th hope to preserve me from danger, all declare it. Then let th worst come, whilst I have life I will never renounce you bu by your own will:" and Edward folded the weeping Arabell to his bosom, as he endeavoured to soothe her agitation, an

to support her mind to bear with firmness whatever might befall him. "I know you, Arabella," continued Wilford; "you are good, kind, and tender; but your temper is timid, and you have much of the weakness of your poor mother in your nature; you are one who in this world is carried down the stream by the force of circumstances, having no force of your own sufficient to meet or to repel them. But think of me, Arabella, and do not sacrifice us both to the tyranny of a blind and heartless bigotry."

"You must not speak thus," said Arabella, "of that faith in which I have been educated. Though my father often accuses me of being half a Reformer in my heart, yet I am of his church; still I learnt from my mother to abhor those acts of cruelty and superstition enjoined by a spirit of persecution."

"God has already touched your heart," replied Wilford, "and in His own good time, I doubt not, but that He will perfect the work he has begun. Have you still the few books I put into your hands, that might lead you to examine the principles of our faith?"

"I have them," answered Arabella; "but I dared not avow such books were in my possession, and given me by you; and besides that, the faith in which I have been educated, forbids its followers to inquire into the truth of its principles by those works the Church deems heretical. My faith demands absolute submission—absolute obedience to its doctrines."

"O heaven!" said Wilford, "to think that the revelation of the Gospel, which, of all other truths, will best bear the most rigid scrutiny, should be thus abused—thus be made the instrument of a deep and wicked policy; first to enslave the mind, and then to govern it by fraud and tyranny!"

"I must be gone," said Arabella; "though a follower of the Church of Rome, my mother early taught me that mercy and charity are consistent with all religions founded on christianity. I would not therefore hear you speak thus of the faith I have been taught to believe by a father; you lack charity in your discourse."

"Well," said Edward, "if I do, it is the persecution of these times that has taught me to think ill of the religion that gives birth to it. I will pray to God for you Arabella, that He may enlighten your mind, and make it more worthy of your heart."

"And I will pray heaven to bless you too Wilford," replied

Arabella, "and to shew mercy to your afflicted parents. feel for them, and deeply commiserate their sad fortunes I remember the dear old man, your father; and even when child, I loved to receive his blessing; for, though he was on of King Edward's clergy, yet I knew him to be a good man and a good man's blessing I always thought must be accept able in the sight of God."

"May every blessing encompass you!" said Edward. "Wil you return towards the house; shall I bear you company, o must I leave you here? And tell me, may I hope sometime to be permitted to see you? if but for a moment, it will b some consolation to me."

"We must part here," replied Arabella. "By the tim you reach the house, I think my father will be at leisure t receive you. Beware what you say to him. I conjure yo to be prudent, for your own sake as well as mine. I dar tarry no longer—farewell!"

Edward Wilford bade her a hasty but affectionate adieu again conjuring her that he might be allowed sometimes t see her. But Arabella assured him that she was not mistres of her own actions, and begged he would cease to press upo her the subject at the present time. Wilford, though disap pointed, was obliged to yield to her request; and at length quitting her side, he advanced without delay towards th house, as Arabella continued her walk to the village o Wellminster.

CHAPTER VII.

EDWARD WILFORD soon gained the entrance, leading through the great gateway to the house of Sir Richard Southwell. As he crossed the inner court, he met a man habited in the garb of a friar. His countenance was dark and swarthy; and there was in it that expression of pride, mingled with gravity, which induced Edward to believe that he was one of those many Spanish friars who had been brought into England by King Philip—a circumstance that excited the indignation of the English, as it was contrary to Philip's marriage-treaty with Queen Mary, wherein it had been expressly stipulated that no foreigner should fill any office in this country, and that Spaniards should not be encouraged to intrude themselves into the court or realm. But Philip, whose marriage had been wholly political, and whose ambition induced him to hope that one day this kingdom would become subject to the Spanish yoke, not only brought in foreigners, but those of the most artful and insidious kind, since many of his train of Spanish friars were of the newly-instituted order of the Jesuits; and he had taken care to select such as were familiar with the English tongue.

The bigotry of Mary induced her to countenance these men; and the measures she adopted, by instituting a Commission that was to perambulate the different towns and cities (expressly to receive informations, to detect the Reformers), clearly proved that she was nothing loth to see the spirit of the Spanish Inquisition established in her own kingdom.

It is well known to every reader of the interesting biography of this period, that amongst other abominable arts laid to ensnare Cranmer, one of them was that of besetting him with some of these Spanish friars, who, by intimidation, flattery, falsehood, and cunning, each employed by turns, at length procured that recantation for which he sorrowed, even at the stake itself. Edward Wilford knew this. No wonder, therefore, that he shuddered, as he looked upon a man who, he did not doubt, was one of these agents of darkness and of guilt.

As Wilford was about to ascend the flight of steps that lay before the hall door of Sir Richard's house, the Friar came up to him, and asked somewhat abruptly, "who and what he wanted there?"

"Sir Richard Southwell," said Edward; and vexed as he was in mind, his temper had become irritable, so that it often vented itself on the least occasion of offence; and he now added rather sharply, "Are you the porter here, that you ask me my business? For if you are not, the question is impertinent."

"My habit will tell you who I am," answered the Friar; "and I have a right to ask any question of whomsoever I please when they approach this house. I therefore repeat my question—What do you want here?"

"Sir Richard Southwell," replied Wilford.

"I do not know that you may see him," said the Friar. "And till I know what is the nature of your business, I do not know if it would be fitting that you should see him."

"I shall ask the question, however, of the porter at the hall-door," answered Wilford, and he advanced immediately up the steps; but ere he could reach the broad platform that terminated their extensive range, the Friar strode up before him; and facing Wilford, declared, in a peremptory manner, that he should not enter the house till he stated upon what business he sought for an interview with Sir Richard Southwell. "I am his confessor and his friend," continued the Friar; "and you are habited in a foreign fashion as strange as your deportment. These are dangerous times, and you shall not enter till I know, at least, who you are."

"These are dangerous times indeed," replied Wilford, "when, as you say, foreigners appear among us, and dare to interrupt an Englishman on his own native land. I am Edward Wilford—the name is well known and honoured in Kent, for my father has long borne it. And who are you that thus you take upon you to question me, as if I stood before the Grand Inquisitor?"

"I am not afraid to declare my name," replied the Friar. "It is John de Villa Garcina."

No sooner had Edward heard these words than the previous irritability of his temper became wrought to the highest degree of passion. This man, he remembered, was the Spaniard who had been as a fiend to Cranmer. This was the man, he knew, who was to fill the cure in Wellminster, from which his own father, Owen Wilford, had been so cruelly ejected. Edward's

blood boiled within him; and forgetting his prudence, in the moment of extreme passion, he rushed up the steps and seized the Friar by the collar of his gown, as he exclaimed: "Your name is enough to tell me what you are. Either give place to me this instant, and let me pass quietly into the house, or your cowl and gown shall not protect you. You shall find your way down the steps much faster than you ascended them."

The Friar looked haughtily upon Edward Wilford, as he said in a calm yet provoking manner, "I could laugh at you for a fool, but that I pity you and think you a madman. But take care what you dare do with me. You shall not pass in."

Wilford instantly, with all the violence and rapidity that passion gives to action, struck the Friar a smart blow, that nearly sent him reeling down the steps; and Pincher, who had followed close at Edward's heels, seeing these signs of hostility on the part of his young master, thought proper to join in the fray, and fiercely attacked the Friar about the skirts of his long gown, in which he tore a large hole. The Friar, in his efforts to shake off the dog, could not immediately attend to his other opponent; and Wilford, whose passions were soon cooled when, even by an act of his own vehemence, he gained but time for a moment's reflection, now blamed himself. He thought he had handled the Friar perhaps too roughly; and that, though he might be a devil, still he wore the habit of a churchman. "I know the fellow is a scoundrel," thought Wilford; "but I ought to have spared him for the sake of his gown."

Yet, notwithstanding this feeling of regret for what he had done, Wilford could not bring himself to make an unlimited apology for the rash act he had committed; and after calling off the dog, he merely said to the Friar, who was even dumb with astonishment and indignation, "Why did you provoke me to forget myself? As a member of the Church, though of an erroneous church—as my elder, I know I ought to ask your pardon; but I cannot do so of a man who is my father's ancient enemy. Nevertheless, if I have offended the laws of my country in your person, I am ready to answer for it."

"Offended the laws of your country in my person!" repeated the Friar, as a look of the most diabolical malice overspread his features; "is that all you have done? And when you struck a blow at me?"—the Friar paused a moment, and then added, in a tone of voice and in a manner not to be described —"You may enter the house now; I shall remember you."

many persons, and with so wide a tunnel that the light streamed down it as from a window, displayed a magnificent pair of dogs chased in silver. The windows were so far raised above the floor, that though they afforded sufficient light to the apartment, yet, on account of their height, no person standing in the room could look out of them to view the beautiful prospect of the Kentish hills and valleys commanded by the site of the house; whilst the arms and bearings of Sir Richard Southwell's family and alliances appeared glittering in the rainbow hues of the varied and brilliant glass. A cabinet of carved ebony supported a service of the richest gold plate, that adorned its top; and upon the oak panels of the chamber were seen, arranged in chronological order, the ancestors of the family, beginning with a portrait, in the hard style of the Gothic ages, that displayed all its minute finish and exact attention, even to the defects of nature.

The originals of these curious pieces had in their day flourished, married, sat for their portraits, and died like other mortals; and some of them had played a more conspicuous part, having risen to the summit of power, having been toppled down thence, committed to the Tower, and lost their heads, "like a family of distinction," during many generations, and especially whilst the contests of the Red and White Roses deluged the country in blood.

There was also a regal picture, which Mistress Deborah informed Edward had been presented to Sir Richard Southwell but very lately, as an especial mark of favour from the Queen herself. This was the portraits of Mary and her husband Philip of Spain, both painted together on one canvass. The royal pair, according to the housekeeper's explanation, were represented in a chamber of the Savoy palace; and through a window in the background might be seen Paul's Cathedral. Queen Mary was seated in a chair; her stern and swarthy countenance, so remarkably characterised by a very prominent bump in the forehead above each eyebrow, looked as disagreeable as bigotry, fretfulness, and cruelty, could make it. Her head, covered by a small projecting cap, arose from out a square collar, that sat quite close up about her face; and her whole person, with a very long and small waist, appeared as rigid, stiff, and unbending, as her own severe and narrow mind. Philip was seen standing near her, with all the morose pride and gravity that distinguished his character expressed in his countenance; and in front of them was seen a couple of little dogs reposing very lovingly together. These might have

been introduced by the flattering pencil of the artist as an emblem of the conjugal sociability and affection of the queen and king; but there were not wanting persons who whispered among themselves (for when was there ever a court without the whisper of sarcasm and scandal?) that, had the painter introduced a dog and a cat in the foreground of his piece, it would much better have expressed the conjugal felicity of the royal pair.

We pass over many other pictures, upon which Mistress Deborah descanted in a manner equally edifying and curious. Judges, she said, there were, some of whom had themselves fallen by the very laws they had so long administered to others; Churchmen, whose robes and beads were the most conspicuous parts of their ministry; and some who had become bishops before they were divines; whilst here and there was seen an antiquated virgin of this noble house, whose pinched features, and stiff and stately gait, were alone sufficient to keep at an awful distance all advances to make them wives.

Above the vast chimney was seen the portrait of Sir Richard Southwell, the present representative of this ancient family. It was esteemed an excellent likeness, and scarcely could there have been found a better subject for the pencil of any artist, from the times of Hans Holbein or Vandyke, down to those of Harlow or Lawrence. Sir Richard, at the date of our narration, was about sixty years old; but this portrait had been executed nearly ten years before, and the painter had not failed to give in it that intellectual expression of countenance so remarkable in the original. The forehead was high, the nose slightly aquiline, whilst the mouth had that character of flexibility and sweetness always indicative of an amiable temper. The beard was represented full above the upper lip, but cut short round the chin, and served as a fringe to form the finishing ornament of the face. The beard and hair were both of a rich chestnut brown, and gave a fine contrast to the clear and healthy complexion of the countenance. Sir Richard appeared in this picture in the dress that he had worn on his presentation as Ambassador from England to the Emperor Charles the Fifth. It consisted of a rich purple velvet doublet, striped with gold embroidery, and a short cloak of the same material falling over the shoulders, and partly concealing the arms. A massive chain of gold, commonly worn by persons of distinction at this period, hung round the neck, and a square collar of the finest lace encircled the throat. The long and narrow waist was confined by a girdle studded with jewels,

and on the right side depended a splendid pouch for the purpose of containing money.

Deborah was eloquent in her remarks on this picture, for she was much attached to her master; nor did her eloquence meet the ear of an indifferent listener, for Edward found so strong a resemblance both in the character of Sir Richard's features and their expression, to his beloved Arabella, that he stood gazing upon the portrait with feelings of deep interest, whilst the housekeeper made sundry shrewd remarks on the original, expressed with a good deal of freedom, as there was now no third person in the gallery to attend to her discourse.

"Everybody," she said, "knew her master to be very learned; he was serious and grave in his manners; so to be sure was every true English gentleman. He was a great statesman, or else such a man as king Henry the Eighth would not have made him, as he did, so often an ambassador, keeping Sir Richard abroad for years together — a thing, as she thought, most specially to be wondered at, inasmuch as Sir Richard had never liked the business of the King's putting away his Queen Catherine, — so to be sure Henry must have thought him the wisest person to do his affairs in foreign courts, else it was no better than banishing him from England for so many years. Sir Richard," she averred, "could talk Latin and Greek like his mother-tongue; yet he was not in the habit of drawing out Latin sentences from his lips. He had some faults, that she must say; but who was without them? He was a rigid Papist, like his deceased friend Sir Thomas More. And she did think Sir Richard was to be blamed for letting Friar John lead him, so much as he did, in every thing. And that though in the main Sir Richard Southwell was as honest, and as kind, and as tender, and as charitable a man as one would desire to see on a summer's day, yet he was much too sore (she thought) against heretics, Lutherans, and such like lost sheep, as Friar John called them."

Here Mistress Deborah's eloquence was interrupted by the opening of the door, and the subject of her somewhat free (but not altogether unjust) remarks entered the apartment. The housekeeper gave a hem! and said aloud, "There's not a wiser man in the Queen's dominions than my master, and a great gentleman he is, to be sure; and one that serves the Pope to her Grace's utmost wish; and so I give you a good-morrow, Master Edward."

And making her curtsey to Wilford, and a formal obeisance

to her master, Mistress Deborah retired, and shut the door of the gallery.

Sir Richard bowed coldly to Wilford, and slightly apologised for having detained him so long, stating that some business of a public nature had occupied his attention till the present moment. Wilford, naturally proud and irritable, felt both the coldness of his reception and the slight manner in which the apology was offered as a marked affront; and, returning Sir Richard's salutation in a way equally cold and distant, assured him that nothing but necessity had induced him to become an intruder at Wellminster Hall.

"My business, indeed," said Edward, "relates merely to the official station of Sir Richard Southwell, since I come to him only as he is the sheriff of Canterbury."

"And what may it be your pleasure to require of me?" said Sir Richard. "I shall willingly listen to the suit."

"My suit is a painful one, painful indeed to the feelings of a son," answered Edward; "I come to ask your leave to see my father."

"My leave to see your father!" exclaimed Sir Edward with surprise—"why, where is he?"

"In prison," said Edward; and unable to suppress the acute feelings that arose in his bosom from the mere mention of the circumstance, all his pride forsook him, and, though in the presence of Sir Richard Southwell, he burst into tears. Whatever were the feelings of Wilford, those of Sir Richard were certainly of a far more extraordinary nature, though they might be less acute. At the communication of this intelligence he turned pale, and appeared extremely agitated, and hastily exclaimed, "Good heaven! how is this? I came down but last night from Whitehall: I knew nothing of this matter."

"It is nevertheless but too true," said Wilford; "my father is at this moment a prisoner in Canterbury Castle, and, I fear, in peril of his life, for Thornton the Suffragan Bishop of Dover has accused him of heresy."

"I feared it, I feared it would end so," said Sir Richard; "I knew it would come to this:" and he added, in great agitation, "What can be done for him?"

"Nothing, I fear," replied Edward Wilford, "if Thornton has the handling of his case. But perhaps something might be effected in behalf of my poor father, if an appeal could be admitted from him to Cardinal Pole. The Cardinal is a man so mild and moderate in his measures, that it is to be hoped the goodness and innocence of my father's life would influence

him to shew what mercy he could; and to my father's character, you, Sir Richard, can bear an honourable testimony."

Sir Richard shook his head, and sighed as he said, "No, that appeal would be useless, since Thornton acts by a commission from the Privy Council, to which is affixed her Grace's sign-manual. There is but one way to save him."

"What is it?" inquired Wilford.

"He must recant," said Sir Richard Southwell.

"My father recant!" exclaimed Wilford, as the blood rushed into his face; "no! he would rather perish than give the lie to his own conscience. It is true he was a friend to Cranmer, but not to Cranmer's recantation. He will follow his example in his death, but never in his weakness. I know my father; he is patient of injury, but not to be shaken in the firmness of his spirit. Will you give me the permission to see him in his prison?"

"I will do it instantly," said Sir Richard; "I will do all I can to serve him—if it were possible, to save him; I will think upon it. But I fear—surely persuasion might affect him. He would not refuse to listen to conviction. His conscience would not be offended; such a refusal must be madness."

"I believe," replied Edward Wilford, "that you, Sir Richard, were once the beloved friend of Sir Thomas More; he gave his head to the block for the sake of conscience, yet he was a persecutor of the people of my father's faith. The Church of Rome considered him a martyr in her cause, as he died to uphold the supremacy of the Pontiff. And why should you think it madness, that a member of the Reformed Church should do as much for the sake of conscience?"

"Sir Thomas More died for the truth," said Sir Richard, "not from an obstinate persistence in error."

"I might answer you," replied Wilford, "even by your own argument; but my purpose here is not to talk but to act. Give me the licence to see my father, and I will thank you and depart. Hereafter, Sir Richard Southwell, we may meet on an occasion very different from the present."

Sir Richard was writing at a table that stood in the apartment, an order for Edward Wilford to see his father, when, at hearing these last words, he looked up, and the expression in Edward's face of that contest of angry and ill-suppressed feeling which agitated his bosom appeared evident, but he did not choose to notice it at the present moment, and continued writing. The door of the apartment opened, when Friar John de Villa Garcina entered the gallery. Wilford trembled with

emotion; unwilling, however, to renew the quarrel of the morning in the presence of Sir Richard Southwell, he stood erect and faced the Friar, but without speaking.

Father John came immediately up to Southwell, and said, somewhat unceremoniously, "Sir Richard, I have been waiting till the persons you were engaged with but now on business should have departed. I am in haste, and would speak with you this moment."

Sir Richard Southwell looked vexed; he excused himself to the Friar, promised to attend him in a few minutes, and hesitated a little as he spoke. It was evident to Wilford that Friar John had an absolute ascendency, and did not suffer it to slumber, over the mind of his patron; as Sir Richard was certainly embarrassed by his presence, like a boy when his schoolmaster comes unexpectedly upon him, and finds him engaged in mischief. "I shall have concluded the affair that engages me with this gentleman almost immediately," said Sir Richard to his confessor, "and then I will attend you."

"Does that gentleman's affairs concern you alone, Sir Richard?" said Friar John, as he threw himself into a chair, and looked Edward boldly in the face.

"His affair is with me," answered Sir Richard very quickly; and he added, in a manner that shewed his anxiety to satisfy his confessor, "the father of master Edward Wilford, I grieve to say it, is in much trouble, and he came hither to gain a licence of me to visit his parent in prison."

"It is most likely, then," said Friar John, "that this gentleman has already forgotten the business that made him the companion of your daughter's walk but this morning, in the woods of Wellminster."

"What do you mean, Father?" exclaimed Sir Richard, in the utmost astonishment; and turning to Edward Wilford, he continued, "Is this true? Have you dared to seek the company of my daughter, after the prohibition you so long since received from me? If you have done so, after your solemn promise to quit your vain and wicked pursuit of my child, you are false and dishonourable indeed; and at this moment, such conduct is both ungrateful and indecorous. I beg you to be explicit; if the holy Father is mistaken in what he asserts, I shall be glad to learn that I censure you unjustly, and I shall stand corrected for a sudden burst of feeling, for which I would ask your forgiveness."

"Speak," said the Friar to Wilford: "you dare not deny the truth."

"I dare refuse to answer you," replied Wilford warmly, "and that the experience of this morning may perhaps make you remember: but to Sir Richard Southwell I am nothing loth to speak the truth. I have seen Arabella. I met your daughter by chance in my way hither; but, by what means the circumstance became known to this Spanish friar is beyond my conjecture, for I saw no one near us in the wood."

"And did you dare," said Sir Richard—"but I will not, I cannot think you would dare call to her remembrance what must for ever blot her fame—her former unhappy connexion with you."

"I disdain falsehood, Sir Richard Southwell," replied Wilford, "this I have dared—to tell your daughter she is my affianced wife; that in the sight of God, she is mine: and though for the sake of one, who is now no more, I was induced to wave my claim for a time; yet I never have, and never will renounce her whilst I have life, unless it is by her own change of affection. Whilst she is mine in heart, we are bound to each other till death sunders the bond."

The Friar, at hearing these words, seemed to enjoy a malicious triumph over Wilford; and Sir Richard Southwell, whose astonishment was only equalled by the agony of his feelings, exclaimed, "Oh, most wretched man! accursed in the sight of heaven for thy own and thy father's rebellion against the faith of the only true Church, dost thou come to fill my heart with misery; to mislead, to steal from me perhaps, my child; to destroy her in soul and body, should thy fatal doctrines infect her mind?" Sir Richard sunk into a chair. Every thought, every feeling seemed to give way before the terrific images that superstition had raised before him, to fright him with the dreadful phantom of its creation. He saw in that vision nothing but Wilford the favoured lover, the future husband of Arabella, and Wilford a heretic! He might render his child the same. Arabella a heretic! the thought was worse than death. It was a thought sufficient to rouse him to anger, almost to madness; since the bare word implied, in the anxious father's mind, the loss of his daughter's happiness to all eternity.

"Young man," said Sir Richard, "hear me! If you are lost to every sense of honour, to every feeling of pity for the pangs which your words have this day inflicted on a father's heart, yet, for the sake of Arabella, for her sake alone, I do beseech you, nay I implore you, to think of her no more! If you are deaf to truth, and an outcast from God's law yourself,

do not make her a participator in your own misery, in this life, and in that which is to come. I have done you one kind act this day; do not repay it with ingratitude."

"I should be base indeed," replied Wilford, "could I deceive you. I cannot renounce the voluntary oath I gave that binds me to your daughter; but of this rest assured, I shall do nothing rashly. I would entreat you to give me the order to see my father, and to let me depart."

"Do not, do not give it," said Friar John. "Sir Richard, it does not become you to encourage the intercourse of heretics."

"You, at least," said Wilford haughtily to the Friar, "may shew some forbearance in this point, as it ill becomes you to injure my father more than you have done already. You are to occupy his place; whilst he, to make room for you, is cast into a prison. Shew some forbearance then, I would entreat you."

"I do; I have shewn forbearance," said the Friar, with an assumed air of patience; "I have not repeated the circumstances of our meeting this morning, before you gained admission to the house."

"What circumstance—what passed?" inquired Sir Richard.

"It is of no moment," replied the Friar; "I would spare that young man. I would not irritate your mind against him, however he may deserve it at my hands. I would spare him."

"Do not spare me," cried Edward, "say all the truth; say what you will, I am prepared to meet it."

"I can bear my own injuries," continued the Friar; "but when I learned from the old park-keeper, who observed you when you thought yourself unnoticed, that you had made this interview with Sir Richard Southwell but a pretext to gain one with his daughter, I could not delay to acquaint him with it."

"It is infamous," exclaimed Southwell, "dishonourable, cruel, thus to play with my feelings, and to tamper with the obedience of my child. Quit my house, and never let me see your face again, or you will force me to take harsher measures than I would willing adopt."

"Give me the order, and I will instantly depart," said Edward.

"I will not give it," cried Southwell. "Begone, young man; quit my sight!"

"Think, Sir Richard," said Edward; "think what you do; can you refuse so poor a service to my father—to him who was once your dearest friend—to Owen Wilford?"

"I dare refuse to answer you," replied Wilford warmly, "and that the experience of this morning may perhaps make you remember: but to Sir Richard Southwell I am nothing loth to speak the truth. I have seen Arabella. I met your daughter by chance in my way hither; but, by what means the circumstance became known to this Spanish friar is beyond my conjecture, for I saw no one near us in the wood."

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"Think, Sir Richard," said Edward; "think what you do; can you refuse so poor a service to my father—to him who was once your dearest friend—to Owen Wilford?"

The mention of the venerable Owen's name in a manner so emphatic by his son seemed to act like a charm to subdue for a while the angry spirit of Sir Richard Southwell; and he said, in a calmer voice, "No, no; as far as my conscience will allow me, I am bound indeed to serve your father. Take the order to see him, and, in heaven's name, depart my house."

"I thank you for it," said Edward; "for the present, my poor father's afflictions occupy my whole heart. But we must meet hereafter; till then, Sir Richard, I bid you farewell."

Edward departed, and Friar John proceeded to enter into a private conference with Sir Richard, the result of which will appear in a future chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

No sooner had Edward Wilford possessed himself of the order to gain admission into Canterbury Castle, than he hastily quitted the house of Sir Richard Southwell. With a mind fraught with anxious reflections, and a heart agitated by conflicting feelings, he at length reached the prison-gates. And so wholly was he absorbed in the expectation of once more embracing his parents in their affliction, that, as he entered the gaol, he did not remark a man who was quitting it at the same moment, and who eyed him narrowly with the utmost attention. We must now leave Edward Wilford for a time to enjoy the melancholy solace of this interview with his father, whilst we say something of the person who had so observingly recognised him.

This was no other than lawyer Cluny, the pettifogging attorney, who had lately been raised, by the recommendation of Bishop Bonner, to fill the post of secretary to the Suffragan of Dover, an active and acute man of the law being considered as absolutely necessary to assist the Commission. When Cluny had thus quitted the Castle as Edward Wilford entered it, instead of walking straightforward with that air of exactness, precision, and gravity, that seemed to say he trod even the King's highway according to law, he paused, and appeared to be considering within himself the discussion of some knotty point.

At length Cluny gave a sudden nod of the head, which, like the fall of the hammer of an auctioneer, indicated that the thing in question was knocked down, or settled past revocation; and, in eager haste, he set forward with a far less dignified air than usually accompanied the movements of this excellent tail of the law; for thus was the respectable Cluny designated by many impertinent persons in Canterbury. Cluny now bent his steps towards the house of Sir Francis Morgan. Of this young man, the reader may possibly remember, Rose had spoken to her brother as a person of whom she entertained some suspicions, as having been instrumental in the accusations so suddenly brought against her father. We shall take

leave, therefore, to outstep the attorney; and whilst he is on the road, as he would express it, to the house of the said Morgan, conduct the reader thither before him, to gain some acquaintance with the knight in question.

Sir Francis Morgan was tall and of a well-formed person. In his countenance there was nothing that could be found fault with, if the features which composed it were separately examined; yet, somehow or other, they were not well put together, since, viewed in combination, they produced an expression neither handsome nor agreeable, and not at all calculated to give the observer a favourable opinion of the man. His eyes were bright but small; and as he had a habit of turning them into the corner close under the eyelid, when he looked at another, it gave a sly and cunning character to his face. His eyebrows were full, and started up towards the temples in that kind of raised arch which modern craniologists designate as the sign or organ of colour, and to which the learned Dr. Spurzheim pronounces all eminent painters may lay claim, as their own peculiar property or distinction. Whether Morgan had any skill or eye for colour, except it might be such as it suited his purpose to give to his own actions, is beyond our power to declare. Be this as it may, he had fine white teeth—no small addition to good looks; and a curling head of hair of rich auburn, with a pointed beard of the same colour, were so decidedly handsome, that no doubt could exist of their being highly favourable to set off the hues of his naturally good complexion.

Morgan had received a university education. He was acute and subtle in argument, and could be a gentleman in manners whenever he thought it necessary to put himself under such a restraint; but as he had associated much with persons whose claim to that distinction was very doubtful, he did not often give himself the trouble to put such a curb upon the license of his own humour. Morgan had been some time a student at Oxford, afterwards a traveller, and of late one of Queen Mary's honorary band of gentleman ushers, and a gallant whom Mary herself had singularly honoured and dignified with knighthood. His father, Judge Morgan, had pronounced the sentence of death which consigned the unhappy Lady Jane Gray to the block; and not long after the tragical fate of that amiable woman, the son of her judge was taken into favour at court. Sir Francis Morgan was gaily dressed in the extremity of the fashion of the period. His doublet was of light blue velvet, made close up to the throat, with small

lapels falling over the shoulders, where the under-dress with long sleeves of white satin became visible; a chain of gold hung round his neck, and a small square collar of fine lace, with the like finish about his wrists, completed the attire of the young courtier.

He was now seated at a table, enjoying a choice flagon of foreign wine; and filling out a cup, he turned to his companion (a young man of his own age, but whose attire, less handsome and much the worse for wear, indicated an inferior condition), and said carelessly, "Sam Collins, give us a pledge, and don't sit there as dull and as chopfallen as a broken-down pawnbroker in Whitefriars, when he finds that he has lent his money upon copper spoons, mistaking them for gold ones."

"I have some cause to be dull, I think," replied Samuel Collins. "Captain Spurcrop's cock beat the old black one clean out of the pit, though his cock hung in the mat before the setters could get the bird on; and so I doubled stakes, for you said that if the devil himself should put him on a cock's-comb and spurs, he could never beat old Rooper; and so, you see, relying upon your judgment, as I said before, I doubled stakes, and——"

"And lost, like a fool as you are, Sammy," said Morgan. "Why, man, I only said so as a blind, because Spurcrop's adversary was within hearing, and we all thought him raw and a greenhorn; and I wanted the Captain to gain the odds, for I owe him a good turn."

"And why did not you tell me so; and why did not you come to the pit yourself then, when the battle was fought?" inquired the disappointed gambler.

"I come to the pit, Sam! I league with cock-fighters, sharpers, and fellows like yourself!" said Morgan; "you are quite mistaken there, Collins. I am a changed man. A changed man, did I say? I am a new man altogether."

"I do not know what you mean," answered Sam Collins; "but all I do know is, that thinking there was not in England a better judge of a game-cock than yourself, I laid my odds on the bird you pronounced no flincher; and so I lost my money."

"Never mind that, Sam," said Morgan; "it shall be no loss to you in the end. For, as my father the Judge used to say, when he gave his charge to the jury: 'If ye follow my view of the law, gentlemen, though ye may do wrong, the fault shall not be yours; since, taking my view of the law, ye do your duty.' And so you, Samuel Collins, having lost by

the law that I laid down respecting the old bird, shall do yourself no wrong, seeing it was your duty to follow where I led. I will make up your odds, and render them more than even, if you, for the present, will leave the company of those lads of the feather, and aid me with your best services."

"I don't know what you mean," again repeated Collins. "You are too deep for me; so please to speak plain."

"Why, then, I will do so in your own language, Sammy," replied Sir Francis. "I am in for Making or Marring; Black and White is the game now. And look yonder, and see the gear that I have to fit me for my new condition!"

Samuel Collins looked very attentively at a side table, to which Morgan pointed with his finger. "There's neither dice-box," said he, "nor dice, nor a card, nor a racket there; I see nothing."

"You see nothing?" exclaimed Morgan, rising up and going towards the table; "there lies that which is worth them all just now; look at that, my gay clerk of St. Nicholas!"

"Why, what the devil do you mean by that?" said Collins; "you are not for a mumming, are you? You are too old to play the Boy-Bishop, I trow; this is nothing but a priest's toy—a rosary."

"A priest's treasury, you mean," replied Morgan. "His God, his nayword, his mask, through the mumming of this goodly farce, called the world. And this, Sammy—this shall be the making of me; for I told you, just now, I was in for Making or Marring. This shall get me a wife."

"A wife!" exclaimed Collins; "why, priests' trinkets are not things to get wives by in Queen Moll's days, I fancy. She is a right true friend to liberty. She bids your married clergy turn their wives adrift, or bear a fagot with them for the transgression of having shared their bondage and their sin."

"But I am no priest, nor like to be one," said Morgan; "and once more I tell you, this rosary is my passport to Hymen's temple, though it wars against heathens as well as heretics. And look how I am sorted for my enterprise! There is my rosary, quite enough to make an oath pass for an honest profession, if I do but swear by it in these days. There is a bright new mass-book."

"Why, you know little or nothing about the meaning of that, Sir Francis," observed Collins.

"So much the better," replied Morgan: "that puts me on a par with half the priests; for ignorance is the staff upon

which the Pope himself leans for support. There is my manual for fasts and feasts, pilgrimages, offerings, and confessions. I have also a box of wax-lights just sent in from the chandler's; every one of them shall blaze before the shrine — I mean the altar, once more set up to Becket, in Canterbury; and I stand a saint in the new calendar, only waiting canonization."

"And what are you to get by all this, I should like to know?" inquired Collins; "a fool is paid for bearing a bauble; and, I suppose, you do not intend to carry yours for nothing?"

"Thy sagacity has been most wonderfully exercised to find out that Sammy," replied Morgan; "when I told you but just now, I am become a zealous Papist, in order to get me a wife. I am determined to have her. She is young, beautiful, rich, and the daughter of Sir Richard Southwell, a furious bigot; and I will hunt out, burn, roast, and grill every heretic in Canterbury, but I will win his favour to carry off the wench that pleases my eye, and would suit my purse, which is something on the decline since I kept company with you Sammy and your worshipful associates."

"And do you think that Sir Richard Southwell will give his only daughter to such a spendthrift as you are," said Collins; "such a lad of the turf, the tennis-court, and the cock-pit?"

"Sir Richard has been much in foreign parts," replied Morgan, "and knows little of my early life; and besides that, Queen Mary has spread the gracious wing of her protection over me, and my zeal for the Church, that shall presently appear, will all plead in my behalf. Add to which, I have embraced and entertain a most warm friendship for a godly man who is sworn to serve me, Friar John de Villa Garcina."

"Friar John!" exclaimed Collins, with astonishment; "and what is he to get out of you? for he works for no man I trow, without his pennyworth for his penny. The odds must be clearly on his side, before he would double a stake."

"A most true calculation," said Morgan; "and I am to repay the services of Friar John, by means that nothing concern you in the present case. You will take your part in my affairs, under my direction; you shall lack no reward."

"And what must I do?" inquired Collins.

"That must in some measure depend on circumstances," replied Morgan. "One part of your duty will be an observance of decent manners till I am married, and don't want you; another part will be, to act as a messenger between

myself, Sir Richard, and my sweetheart, Mistress Arabella; and lastly, and chiefly, to do whatever I may direct, to swear to whatever I may swear to, to be a witness to whatever I may require you as a witness, to vouch for the morality of my character, to say yes to whatever I will have yes, and no to whatever I declare shall be no, and——"

"To wear a straw in my shoe, walk Fleet-ditch, ready to kiss the cross for a groat even in the very teeth of the pillory," cried Collins. "I thank you, Master Morgan, for such goodly promotion. Why, you would make a rogue and a sharper of me at once."

"That's quite beyond my power, Sammy," said Sir Francis, "seeing the thing is already done to my hand; for there is not a bear-ward, nor a cock-setter, nor a sticker of bills for lost goods on Paul's Cross, but will give thee a character for excellence in all the roguery that falls within the ken of their vocations. But come, man, never flinch; I will apparel thee in new braveries. Do me but good service till the business I have at heart shall be settled, and I will pay thee ten times more than thou canst hope for thy exertions."

"I'll have something down," said Sam Collins; "and if I am to be thus employed, I will have wherewithal to hansel my new calling! I will not trust you."

"Not trust me, Sammy?" replied Sir Francis; "why, surely you strangely forget yourself. Remember, Samuel, to whom you are indebted for that precious neck of thine being still unstretched upon thy shoulders. Had not I stood thy friend, the follower of Sir Thomas Wyatt had long since graced the gallows, after his noble master was beheaded for a rebel. Did not I swear, that when the Kentish rascals broke into Gardiner's house in Southwark, and plundered his plate and goods, that thou wast with me in Canterbury, when all the time I knew you were the very man that stole Winchester's cross that had the diamond in the centre of it?"

"Well, and have not I done as good service to you, Sir Francis?" said Collins. "When you and the wild boys of the City dressed up the cat like a friar ready to say mass, and hanged the animal in Cheap, who but me got the prentice lads brought before the Star-Chamber, and had them well whipped too, on bare suspicion of the fact? Who did this but Samuel Collins, and all to hide your share in that frolic, that might otherwise have ended warmly for you; for the Star-Chamber, could they have brought it home, would have made Smithfield smoke again with the punishment of the transgression?"

"There is no need, however," answered Morgan, "thus to repeat our mutual services to each other. My affairs are already in a pretty train, since the Queen has recommended me to Sir Richard Southwell, as a proper son-in-law to support the honours of his ancient house. There is only one thing I fear, before our bargain is struck:—Sir Richard may be pleased to call upon me for a sight of my rent-roll, title-deeds, and expectations. Such a call would something puzzle even my policy, for the rent-roll has suffered inroads and gashes; many a bull's horn and a bear's foot hath made a hole in it. The title-deeds are mostly in the hands of the Israelites, who accommodate young gentlemen at their need. And as for expectations, there stands a sad block in the way of them: first, my father is alive, and never takes physic; secondly, I have not hitherto succeeded in persuading my worshipful cousin, Edward Wilford, to get himself hanged, burnt, or beheaded; for if *he* were but out of the way, Sir Francis Morgan might write himself next heir to one of the best entailed estates in all England, the certain future possessor of it, whenever it shall please the devil to carry off his old uncle, Sir John Mordaunt, already tottering on the brink of the grave."

"You took good pains, I believe," said Collins, "to embroil your cousin Edward in Wyatt's affair. You made me join Sir Thomas in the hope to entrap Wilford."

"I did so," answered Morgan. "I used thee, Sammy, as an old wife does her chalk egg that she puts into the nest, that it may lead the hens to follow and lay to it. Thy joining Wyatt, I thought would be a sure bait to Wilford—a sure sign that I next meant to follow him, and that the arguments I held out were sincere. But Edward was too shy, too prudent, to be wholly caught, although he did fall into one trap of my contrivance."

"What was that?" inquired Collins; "surely he never took up arms to join Wyatt and the Kentish rebels?"

"I grant he did not," replied Morgan, "but he did what was almost as bad. He answered the letters that I contrived Sir Thomas Wyatt should write to him, and so fell into a private correspondence with a man who soon after lost his head for treason."

"I wonder how such a prudent fellow as Edward Wilford is in State matters could have been so easily caught to do even that," observed Collins; "I thought that he always mistrusted you."

"But we trapped him by an artifice," said Morgan; "we made him believe that the Princess Elizabeth was the sole object of Wyatt's plot, and that no personal injury was meditated against her sister Mary; but only to save Elizabeth from the fate Gardiner was aiming to bring upon her, and to preserve this realm from becoming a furnace to the Reformers, we wished not only to prevent the Spanish match, but to place Elizabeth on the throne."

"I suppose, then, it was on this subject that Edward Wilford corresponded with Wyatt?" said Collins.

"There you are quite right, Sammy," continued Morgan. "Edward Wilford fired with ardour at the thought of becoming a *cavaliero servente* to the young Princess, whom we made him believe, and with truth, that the Papists were labouring to destroy. He would save Elizabeth, he would spend the last drop of his blood in her defence. You never saw a more ready or hot-headed champion."

"And what made him draw back then," inquired Collins, "after going so far as this?"

"Why, because he found out," continued Morgan, "that Wyatt was at heart a mere rebel, and a very weak-headed one too; and that his first intention, if he proved *successful*, was to deal with Mary after her own way of making things sure. The tower and the axe are certain remedies to silence the tongue, and put down the title of man or woman, should either become troublesome."

"And so Wilford gave up all thoughts of joining Wyatt, I suppose?" said Collins.

"He did so," replied Morgan; "and soon after went abroad in the dumps, for a cause I could never learn. And as to myself, Mary took me into favour when I least expected it. So I became loyal, and helped Wyatt, as you know, to the scaffold. And as for Edward Wilford, he is still alive, I hear, at Frankfort; and therefore the old block between me and the Mordaunt estate stands as fast as ever."

"'Tis pity," said Collins, "but that you could get him to England; he might then be easily caught; for his father, I hear, was yesterday laid in limbo by Thornton, for a charge of heresy: and these are blessed times to give one an opportunity of getting rid of a stumbling-block, whilst proclamations and commissions daily come out thick upon each other, and so severe, that a man may be informed against and entrapped just as much for what he does not do, as for what he does do. Thus, not going to confession, or not walking in a procession

on a Saint's day, is enough to hang or burn any man, though he be as honest as a judge."

"As honest as a judge ought to be, you mean, Sammy," said Morgan; "for judges now must chime into the same tune with the Court, and so must the jurymen too, or woe be to them; for if they run counter, the Star-Chamber comes down upon them with a spanking fine for acquitting a prisoner, as it did in Winter and Throgmorton's case.* They should have had my father for their judge; for, as he says—'Gentlemen of the Jury, her Grace's pleasure being to see justice administered in these realms, it would ill become us, who are her Grace's servants, and here represent her most sacred person, to do other than her Grace herself would do. Therefore, viewing the offence before us as she would view it, and understanding the law as her Grace would understand it, I pronounce the prisoner guilty.' That's what I call a wise judge, Sammy, and one who will always be an honest man—at Court. But we are rambling in our talk from the purpose. I forgot to tell you—but first get up and open the door, for somebody is rapping upon it."

Samuel Collins immediately obeyed, and, on opening the door of the apartment, lawyer Cluny walked in.

"A good-day to you, Master Attorney," said Sir Francis. "You are ever most welcome to me, for I never see your face unless you come to get something out of me, by getting something for me. To what cause may I attribute the pleasure of this visit?"

Cluny looked at Collins, as he said that he had some little business, that perhaps Sir Francis might desire to hear in private."

"If you mean, Master Attorney," replied Sir Francis, "that Sam Collins ought to be put out of the room before you speak, I may tell you that he is a part of myself: he obeys me as my hand obeys the will of my head. I have him all my own, as well as I have you, Cluny. Is it not true? have I not bought you, body and soul, Sammy?"

Cluny still looked doubtful. "Why," continued Morgan, "if I bid Sammy sit down in the corner and not hear our discourse, he will presently become a joint-stool, with no more ears, life, or motion about him, than the block upon which he sits; and giving up his mind to a notable train of calculation,

* Sir Nicholas Throgmorton being tried as an accomplice in Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion, was acquitted by the jury for want of evidence to convict him. And for this acquittal the jury were severely fined and imprisoned by order of the Star-Chamber.—*See* Burnet and Fox.

away he goes in thought to the bull-yard, the bear-garden, or the cock-pit, and never awakes out of his reverie till a flap on the ears, or a douce on the chaps, brings him back again to a sense of passing objects. Sammy is the best of all counsel-keepers, since, if he should even betray them, he is so known a liar that nobody will credit his tale; therefore, I choose him for my friend, agent, and bosom-counsellor."

"A most prudent choice," said Cluny, grinning; "and with these premises taken for the surety of his secresy in your matters, I suppose I may proceed to open the case."

"By all means," answered Morgan.

"Why then," continued Cluny, "I have rare news for you. Whom do you think I this day crossed as he entered Canterbury Castle?"

"How in the devil's name can I guess," answered Morgan, "unless it might be the Evil one himself, who very naturally came to salute you, Cluny, as a brother, whilst taking a turn in Canterbury, to pay his respects to Thornton and other of his particular friends?"

"I saw a man quite as evil to you, Sir Francis, as the devil himself might be," said Cluny. "Edward Wilford brushed by my elbow as I came out of the Castle."

"And is he in Canterbury Castle at last?" exclaimed Morgan, snapping his fingers; "then there's that for his claim to the Mordaunt property." And a second snap of the fingers accompanied these words.

"He is not there as a prisoner," replied Cluny. "His father being laid up, may account for the son going thither, probably to visit him. But I did not know till to-day that he was in England, or in Canterbury Castle."

"But you can find the means to keep him there, and to make him become a prisoner," said Morgan; "or of what avail is all the knowledge of statutes and proclamations with which you have crammed your brains?"

"Something might be done by way of writ of detainer," replied Cluny. "But, before I proceed farther, however much that respectable gentleman, Master Samuel Collins, may resemble a joint-stool, I must positively insist upon his leaving the room, as he may not keep my counsel quite so well as he does yours."

"Well, you shall be satisfied," said Morgan. "So, do you, Sammy, walk off for the present; and, if you have nothing better to do, stroll into the cathedral, and kneel down amongst the old women that set up their candle-ends before the new

altar to Becket's memory, run your fingers over a row of cherry-stones on a string that you may buy for twopence, and thus tell your beads, and establish for yourself a character of penitence and of piety, that may presently serve me, as you are one of my followers;—so, begone, I say!"

Samuel Collins rose up to depart, though with evident reluctance; and turned an angry glance upon Cluny, as he considered him the cause of this dismissal.

Morgan called him back again. "What is your pleasure with me?" inquired Collins, sulkily; "am I only to be a joint-stool, to be shifted about, first here, and then there, at every man's pleasure, as well as your own?"

"No, no, Samuel," said Morgan; "all I would now say is by way of caution. I bid you not presume to look at, or to kiss so much as the tip of the ruff, or the hem of the frows of the pretty little house-damsel that waits below, since she is already designed for the special favour of thy betters.—That's all, Sammy—so now begone."

Collins departed. Cluny rose up, and examined the door to see that it was close shut; then he paused a moment, and opened it again to look without, to satisfy himself that no listeners lurked near the spot. Again he shut the door, and proceeded to take a peep behind the arras, and even to open a large corner-cupboard. "Why, what are you about, Cluny?" said Sir Francis; "do you fancy yourself surrounded by listeners and spies?"

"No," answered Cluny; "but I know how closets and tapestry are used now-a-days. I have, before now, found both could conceal a suspected person when in danger of the laws. Heretics and makers of false moneys have sometimes owed their lives even to an old hencoop, a copper furnace, or a corner cupboard: witness the case of Mistress Ann—I forget her name—who came under the information of Doctor Argentine, before he left Colchester."

"Well, all is safe here, at least," said Morgan; "for listeners would not exactly suit with my social communications with Sam Collins, or Black Sam, as we call him, from the fellow's raven beard."

Cluny, now quite satisfied that no one save Morgan could attend to his discourse, sat down at the table, and as a prelude to it, filled out a cup of wine, and merely nodding his head to Sir Francis, drank it off. "You make yourself at home, Master Attorney," said Morgan; and he added, somewhat haughtily; "you must have some rare communication to

make, thus to assume upon the subject of it, by taking your stand on a footing rather more familiar than I have yet granted to you, whatever freedom I may have allowed to Collins. But he is of an order very different from a limb of the law. Collins and I have made kings, queens, and knaves dance before us on the same table; we have trolled the black-eyed white boys from the same box, and that's a thing gives a man a license to equality all the world over. But as for you—"

"I mean no offence, no undue liberty," replied Cluny; "but I have lost breath in posting hither to do you service, so I presumed to refresh myself by a draught of this excellent Rhenish."

"Take another, if you will," said Morgan, "and proceed to your business."

"Not a drop more," answered Cluny; "the winebibber is a fool, if not a lost man; for wine often lets out the truth with more ease than even Master Sergeant Twistem's cross-questioning. I will be brief in my matter, and I crave of you, Sir Francis Morgan, to be serious, since the said matter is specially your own concern. You have often consulted me upon certain claims that the law gives you to certain properties, estates, and dependencies, now held, on a life tenure only, by Sir John Mordaunt, knight."

"And my very good uncle," said Morgan, "whom I should have heartily wished at the devil long ago, but that Edward Wilford, being also his nephew, and one year older than myself, is the next heir."

"That is the very point in question," replied Cluny. "I must have a clear understanding of this business; as it is fitting I ought to have, when professionally engaged on a law consultation. I wish to do my duty by you, and not to take your money for nothing."

"You have called in yourself, and constituted yourself as head of a professional consultation, as you are pleased to call it," said Morgan; "but, as I suppose you really have something in the wind to my advantage, you may run your bill upon tick if you will, and set down this conversation as the first charge."

"Not quite the first charge, as I shall presently shew," answered Cluny, "as my business for you began yesterday; —but more of that anon. Let us now proceed to inquire into the title. The said estates, properties, and dependencies, it appears, were entailed by will of the late Sir Talbot Mordaunt, knight, on his son—and he (the said Sir John) failing in issue male—the entail still continues; and at his demise the said

entailed estates, properties, and dependencies, go to the next eldest heir male, he being also of kin to the said Sir John. Did not old Sir Talbot's will run thus?"

"It did," replied Morgan. "But do be brief, I pray you, and come at once to the subject of your business."

"I am doing so," answered Cluny: "but things must go in a regular course, according to law. And the aforesaid Sir John Mordaunt, knight (still surviving), had an elder sister, named Alice, which sister Alice married one Owen Wilford, sometime clerk, and now in Canterbury Castle; by which marriage came an heir male, one Edward Wilford, who being born one year before the son of the youngest sister (married to Judge Morgan), *ergo*, that eldest sister's son becomes next heir to the said Sir John Mordaunt, knight, before the youngest sister's son (yourself, Sir Francis), as the aforesaid Sir John never has been married, and therefore cannot have issue male legitimate in the eye of the law. I think I have stated the case very clearly, and that you must perfectly understand me."

"Upon my soul, I could not," said Morgan, "only that I knew what you meant to say quite as well as yourself, before you opened your mouth. The whole business might be spoken in two words, without this long harangue."

"Pardon me, Sir Francis," replied Cluny; "the law is precise. We must take every word into consideration; for the omission or admission of one word more or less into a will might render null and void (such is the beauty of our laws) all the intents of the testator; as I could prove by sundry cases, and specially one that came under my own management but very lately, whereby I disclaimed a widow and six children, in favour of the rich old Lord of Couvoitise, an alien, a foreigner, and quite a stranger (though a relative) to the party deceased. The case ran thus——"

"Spare me the recital of it, I beseech you," said Morgan, interrupting him, "and only answer me one question. If Edward Wilford were dead, am not I next heir to Sir John Mordaunt, our old uncle?"

"Certainly you are," replied Cluny, "heir beyond revocation, your uncle having no power to cut off the entail."

"But Edward Wilford is alive," said Morgan, "and seems likely to live on still: for though I should gladly send him to heaven on the wings of the law, if it were practicable, either by hanging or what not, could the law trap him, yet I cannot bring myself to knock out his brains, or to get rid of him in the Italian fashion; and so my hopes, as I see, rest but on the

chances of nature. I wish the fellow had a fever, or that the sweating sickness or the plague would visit him, or that he would catch the small-pox, and have Doctor Argentine to physic him; for that learned leech fills a churchyard as fast as a hungry heir or a greedy sexton could desire. But my hopes did, I confess, once rest in the expectation that Edward would do something to bring himself within the clutches of the gentlemen of the black robe, to get rid of him."

"You are quite right," said Cluny, "in desiring to do all things according to law; that is professional. And your father, the worthy Judge Morgan, used to say, 'Law is the bulwark of governments: judges and individuals, and he who walks under the shadow of it, need not trouble his head about justice or equity—things to which the ignorant lay claim, as if they were to take place of the wisest institutions for the support of authority. Give me the letter of the law,' says Judge Morgan, 'and leave mercy to the hangman, to use it by finding a tough rope and a gallows that will not break down; so that a man be not hung twice instead of once in his lifetime.'"

"Your praises of my father," replied Sir Francis, "are—"

"Are irrelevant, I grant it," said Cluny; "they have nothing to do with the business before the court—I mean, before ourselves. I can point out a way to make you heir, both legal, apparent, and direct, to the estates, properties, and dependencies in question, whether your cousin Edward Wilford live or die."

"Can you do that?" exclaimed Morgan exultingly; "if you can, you can do more than even my father himself could do for me, came it before a court, though he should sum up, as well as pack a jury to decide the matter. Prove your assertion, and I will double, nay treble, every charge you may make."

"I shall make no charges at all,—that is, no specific charges to you," replied Cluny; "I shall only insert, *Item, to such a consultation on such a date*—leaving a blank for you to fill it up, according as your own generosity and conscience rate the sum: I deal liberally with my friends."

"I understand," said Morgan: "in order to make them come down with more cash than you dare specify; to hear their own generosity lauded; and to see you pocket the money, without even causing your nose to blush deeper than it does for very shame. You are a sly dog, Cluny; but I know you, never mind. Out with your plot—I will pay you for it."

"Plot!" cried Cluny, "plot!—no plot on my part, I do assure you; only a thing taken in the course of the law. All plots come under the statute against conspiracies. Any person or persons who might conspire, hold together, assemble themselves, entertain discussion or discussions, to the manifest prejudice, harm, or injury of——"

"Of the devil!" said Morgan, "by taking his work into their own hands. On with your business, then, in the way of the *law*, and not in the way of a plot; for *law* it shall be for me, and good law too, if it gives me a chance of the Mordaunt property."

Cluny now looked particularly solemn; and shuffling his hands into his pockets, with much gravity and caution, he said, "I have run no small risk, Sir Francis, even in carrying about me such papers as these, purposely with a view to do you service; and that risk ought to be taken into consideration—not strictly in law, but certainly in equity."

"Why, I thought you said just now, and quoted my father for it," answered Morgan, "that equity had nothing to do in matters of business."

"Certainly not in the common course of things," replied Cluny; "but where an equitable consideration bears in with a point directly in law, it should always be respected. That's quite professional, I assure you."

"And it shall now double thy fee Cluny," said Sir Francis, "if it appears that these papers are really useful to me. Let me see them?"

"Not yet," answered Cluny—"not yet. I must first premise, that having called upon you, Sir Francis, to bear witness to the fact of my innocence in having them upon me, and the honesty of my intentions in shewing them to you, they must, after the forthcoming inspection by you, remain in my hands, at least for the present, as they will become evidence."

"Evidence or not, do let us know what they are about," said Morgan; "you get on in this manner, like a snail running a race. Why, you would tire the patience even of my father himself, and lull him to sleep with such prosing, before his usual time for taking a nap, when the prisoner opens his defence. Do let me see them."

"They are dangerous papers—very dangerous, even to handle," replied Cluny; "since, the Saints bless her most gracious Majesty's person and throne! they treat on matters of high-treason. They contain letters that passed between

that noted rebel Sir Thomas Wyatt and your cousin Edward Wilford."

Morgan started up at hearing these words—once more snapped his fingers, danced round the room, and, in his exultation, fairly hugged Cluny with so much vehemence that, as the attorney was but a little man, and his patron a tall one, Morgan ran one of his eyes upon the corner of Cluny's trencher-cap. The extreme pain of the accident in a moment brought him to his senses, and cooled his ecstasy. Morgan swore an oath or two, cursed both Cluny and his cap, then called out that he was a made man; ran to a side table to snatch up an ewer of water to wash his eye, and at length was enabled to go on with the business. "I beseech you," said the attorney, "to moderate this feeling of ecstasy; it might make against you. It is not at all professional. People who deal in matters of the law should have nothing to do with feelings. It might be brought to prove you were an interested person."

"Why, and so I am an interested person," replied Morgan. "If those papers can be made to hang Edward for high-treason, and so make me next heir to the Mordaunt estates, who need be so joyful as I?"

"They will go well towards hanging him, backed by some other little matters that may appear hereafter, in the due course of time," said Cluny. "But if he is hanged or not, being once found guilty of high-treason, though her Majesty should remit the final judgment of the sentence, it will be just as well for you, since the act of treason brings him at once under the statute; and forfeiture of all his personals, lands, goods, chattels, and all thereunto belonging, must follow. And, by a farther clause in the aforesaid statute, any claim he may have hereafter to any lands, estates, properties, tenements, or dependencies, in the realm of England, is also forfeited. The clause is specific, and was inserted for the farther prevention of any person or persons meddling in matters of treasonable practice."

"Then I am safe; all must be sure," said Morgan.

"It is true," continued Cluny, "that the sovereign Lord or Lady, the King or Queen's Majesty, may remit the fine and capacitate the attainted. But you have so much interest with our gracious Queen, and your father is so loyal and accommodating a judge to the pleasure of the Court, that there can be no doubt that Edward Wilford would have no chance of receiving the royal pardon, if the case is well got up.

Much, and indeed I may say all, depends on the legal management of the thing; and I am your attorney."

"You are my angel, Cluny," cried Morgan; "an angel worthy the devil's paradise itself. I see it all. He must certainly be hanged. What is to be done next? when will it come on? how shall you proceed against him?"

"Not yet; haste will spoil the business," replied Cluny. "I have not yet got all things ready. These letters will but be a part of my measures. And, besides that, the Bishop of Dover will most likely wish to have the handling of this young man, on some charge, perhaps for heresy: and I must not run in before the Bishop. Delicacy would not let me take the business of dealing with this young man out of the Suffragan's hands till I know his pleasure. But should he, as I suspect it will prove, have enough to do already with the father, now in Canterbury Castle, I will rid you of the son as well as any man in the kingdom; for, as I said before, these papers are only a part of my measures against him. You shall know all in time."

"And how did you get those papers?" inquired Morgan. "I would have given anything in the world to come by them, long ago; but I never could succeed, although I procured the goodwill of Sir Thomas Wyatt to open the correspondence."

"I got them, I assure you," replied Cluny, "quite in the way of the law; and knowing they would be useful to you, I lost no time in coming hither to hold this consultation."

"You have done well," said Morgan. "When shall I see you again? When shall Edward Wilford be accused? Do think upon what must be done next. Tell me all your plan."

"I cannot stay now," answered Cluny. "To-morrow, old Wilford is to take his first examination before the Suffragan of Dover, for heresy; and I must attend Thornton this afternoon, to receive his instructions as to some part of the business in which I am to be employed. I must instantly wait on him, having already overstayed my time in this consultation."

"I will forthwith see Collins," said Morgan; "he was one of Wyatt's men: he is now safe, and he may be made useful, if we should want a witness or so besides the papers. Though now I think of it, I believe Collins never saw Edward Wilford."

"You should not take upon you to say that," replied Cluny; and he added after a short pause—"He may not instantly remember having seen Wilford; but you don't know what a little time given to Collins for consideration may do—what

a little time to recollect himself may bring forth. When I was Under-secretary to the Clerk of the Star Chamber, many witnesses were brought before their Lordships who were soon made to remember things they had long ago forgotten, or perhaps never properly remembered or understood in all their lives till their Lordships condescended to instruct them. And so I wish you a good-morrow, Sir Francis; and whilst you refresh Master Collins's memory, I will wait upon the Suffragan."

Cluny departed; and Morgan, highly elated with the hopes the late intelligence had raised within him, went in search of his convenient friend and counsellor Samuel Collins.

CHAPTER IX.

All things being prepared for the first examination of Owen Wilford, previous to the great day of trial, the Commissioners proceeded to assemble themselves together in an apartment of the Suffragan Bishop of Dover's house at Canterbury. These Commissioners consisted of Thornton, Nicholas Harpsfield, archdeacon of Canterbury, Friar John de Villa Garcina, and Sir John Baker, a civil magistrate for the county of Kent.

The apartment was spacious, and hung throughout with tapestry; and what was something extraordinary, the arras in this chamber was suffered to fall even over the space of the large chimney, so as completely to conceal it: near the chimney stood a table, at the upper end of which Thornton was seated; and opposite to him, at the lower end, Friar John. On the side next to the chimney, Harpsfield and Baker sat close together, cheek-by-jowl, not unlike bloodhounds in a leash, to which, of all brute animals in creation, this pair of worthies might most justly be compared.

Nicholas Harpsfield was, in every sense of the word, a cruel man. Nature had given him a temper fitted for his present work; in addition to which, his education, his religion, and, though last not least, his interest all conspired, not only to sanction cruelty, but to render it meritorious in his own eyes, so that he became even savage in the exercise of his delegated authority. And as nature seldom, if ever, gives the lie to her own works, by rendering the external appearance of what is in itself bad, agreeable; so in the present instance she had taken especial care that no mistake should occur from only a casual view of Harpsfield's exterior. Hardened cruelty was stamped on every one of his large and disgusting features. Each line in his face was rigid, and seemed incapable of the least variation of expression. The head and throat (by a fanciful tracer of likenesses between man and beast) might readily be supposed to bear an affinity to the bull; whilst the upper row of his teeth, white, but in form resembling the tusks of the boar, protruded beyond the thick and African lips of the Archdeacon. And in order that the whole man

should be fashioned in perfect conformity, nature had supplied him with a voice more harsh, cracked, and hoarse, than that of an old boatswain who has broken his wind by hard service in many a day and night of stormy weather.

Sir John Baker, one of the most zealous among the civil powers under Mary's commission—a man selected on account of his aptitude for such employ—was considered by all persons so like Bonner, that even Mary herself had been heard to say (after Sir John Baker had kissed hands on his appointment at Court) "That truly the Kentish Justice of Peace did so resemble my Lord of London, that they twain seemed but one man; and did the spirit of the Knight but also so liken itself to that of her worthy Father in God, she nothing doubted but Kent would find good rule, or the fagots of Canterbury would smoke in the lack thereof."

After having said that Baker and Bonner so much resembled each other, it may seem almost needless to add that Sir John was brutal—brutal in mind, brutal in body. In the latter he was so unwieldy that the ascent of a flight of steps, the gentle rise of an eminence, or "eight yards of uneven ground," were to him as the purgatory of this world; and the labour of getting over either, burthened as he was with the "fair round belly" that he carried, like a mountain, before him, so put the Justice out of breath, that it was not till after a long panting and blowing he could sufficiently recover himself to be able to speak at all. Sir John had that round head, round jowl, bottle-nose, and full and hanging lips, which so frequently mark the countenance of a sensualist; where every thing is large, fat, and jolly, except the eyes, which twinkle from out their greasy sockets like a farthing rushlight reduced to its smallest flame.

Sir John Baker, fond of importance, fond of being a man of office and a man of power, delighted not only in the greatness of himself, but also in the greatness of his acquaintance: and he was proud even of the mountain of fat that he carried before him, and the jolter-headed distinction of his person, because it likened him to so great a man as Bonner. "As my Right Reverend Friend, the Bishop of London, is wont to say;" or, "as my very Worshipful acquaintance, and very good lord, my Lord of London, is apt to do," were phrases continually in Sir John's mouth; who, the more to liken himself to this Very Reverend Friend, and to resemble him in manners as he did in person, adopted as much as possible the low expressions and very abusive terms Bonner was wont to use in his dis-

course, and with which he made a point to interlard his addresses to the unhappy people who, under the title of heretics, were brought before him. Thus, a *picklouse fellow* (a very favourite epithet with Bonner), a scurvy ass, beast, fool, jackanapes, rascal, heretic, filthy Lutheran, and many other such appellatives, Sir John had most carefully gleaned and conned by rote from the elegant vocabulary of the Right Reverend Father in God, Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London.

This precious pair of Commissioners, Harpsfield and Baker, formed a singular contrast to their brothers in office, Thornton and Friar John. The former, though a resolute and daring fellow, thought it not unnecessary to endeavour to shroud the worst part of his character under the mask of hypocrisy. All he did was for the Church; he was a man all conscience. To hold religion in the heart might be enough with ordinary men; but Thornton was so pious, so zealous, so conscientious, that he had religion all over him: Religion possessed him from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, and made known her influence, even in the quivering of his little finger. And so tender were the pious man's feelings, it was confidently said, that he laboured hard and sore at the conversion of many to his own way, and most especially if the heretic before him was of the softer sex, and young and pretty to boot. But as to the old women, he mostly let them go to the devil their own way; very wisely judging that the confirmed habits of age were not to be so easily overcome as the inexperience of youth; and that the garrulity so frequently found in women of years would have silenced his arguments by fairly talking them down. But, with the silent, timid, and youthful party, there was every thing to be expected—every chance that the soft, and whispering, and gentle exhortations of the Suffragan of Dover might produce some effect; especially as he used a great and kindly latitude in his arguments, allowing, with all Christian charity, for the weaknesses and sins of mere mortality—always having that saving clause in his mouth, the Pope's absolution for sin, which, like a lusty besom, comes in, and sweeps clean away all the spots and impurities that may defile the souls of erring creatures. These were motives for the pious man's zeal, that were insisted upon by his friends, to prove how foul and false were those slanders of wicked persons who represented his character in a very different light, and who whispered that he acted from motives entirely worldly, and, under the gown of a Suffragan Bishop and the air of a saint, carried a heart, base, selfish, and depraved.

Thornton, in his manners, as well as in his language, much resembled a sect that sprung up after his day; since he had about him an air of decent humility, an eye often downcast, and a speech that Oliver Cromwell himself (had he been in existence) might have considered worthy even of a Puritan.

Friar John had, on the contrary, in his swarthy and dark countenance, his black eye of irresistible penetration, his lofty brow, and assured mien, that stamp of haughty, overbearing insolence, that unmoved gravity of deportment, which characterised both his religion and his country. He was a man, who, like the Pope, his triple-crowned master, seemed to say, "Fall at my feet, ye sinners, and honour yourselves with the kiss even of my toe." Such were these Commissioners, now assembled, expecting the arrival of the prisoner, Owen Wilford. Thornton was employed in looking very devoutly upon a holy book. His mind, it is likely, was abstracted and busy elsewhere, or he must have had a mode of reading peculiar to himself, for the book that lay before him was fairly turned upside down. Baker and Harpsfield babbled together of circumstances connected with their vocation, of warrants granted by the justice to apprehend heretics, and of judgments passed by the archdeacon for their dismissal to a higher court, through the furnaces of his own. Friar John was the only person disengaged. He seemed to keep himself within himself, as if, even in this association with his fellows, he almost disdained to be their associate; and sat lofty, and serious, and silent, alone, though in the company of the Commission.

At length a bustle on the outside the chamber announced the arrival of the expected party; and the door opening, three or four fellows, bearing in their hands bills, or glaives, ushered in the unfortunate Owen Wilford, attended by all his family, Alice, Edward, Rose, and Abel Allen; and following close at the heels of the latter, appeared rather a singular intruder into such a presence—no other than Pincher, the faithful attendant on the Wilford family, in their adverse as well as in their prosperous fortunes. Alice and her husband alone were prisoners.

Wilford, though a man over whose head nearly sixty years had passed, advanced with a firm step and an upright carriage. He was still attired as a churchman, and wore his black silk cap over his white hairs. His countenance was composed; and there was altogether that air of resignation, but undaunted firmness about him, which impressed even the Commissioners with an involuntary feeling of respect. They were silent as

he approached them. At length Thornton, who acted not only under the Commission, but also as the representative of Cardinal Pole, now addressed the prisoner.

"Master Wilford," said he, "you come well attended; our summons was issued that only you, and the woman sometime called your wife, should this morning appear before us."

"It was my wish," replied Owen, "to spare my children a scene which must, I think, give them pain; but they so earnestly entreated to be allowed to follow me hither, that at length I yielded to their desires. Nevertheless, if it is displeasing to you, they shall return whence they came."

"No," said Thornton, "let them bide where they are, since I could wish them to witness the merciful and kind considerations that have now caused us to summon you hither. But what business has that old man to intrude himself? And how darest thou, sirrah, bring your cur after you into this presence? Catchpole Miller, turn out the dog."

"Please your Reverence," said Abel Allen, "I have lived so long with my dear master, that I begged to be allowed to follow him here, to see how it might fare with him: and as for Pincher, he is as quiet a dog as any in Canterbury, if he be let alone. And I will warrant that, if your Reverence does not be angry with him, he will sit down just near my heels, and say never a word to disturb your doings. But if you turn him out, I can't promise for his taking it so quietly. So, please your Reverence, let me and Pincher bide where we be, to see how it fares with old master, and we will be on our best behaviour."

"I may probably want you," replied Thornton. And as the Suffragan did not repeat the order to turn out the dog, Abel Allen held up his finger, nodded at Pincher, and then gave him a pat on the head; and the intelligent animal immediately disposed himself for a proper demeanour, sat down upon his haunches, with his two forelegs still upright; and, turning up his nose, so as to look Abel full in the face, he seemed to say, "I will wait upon you as quiet as you would have me."

Thornton continued. "It must be known to you, Owen Wilford, that you are now in bonds, under a heavy charge, for a contumacious resistance of the lawful authorities of this land, in having, contrary to the faith once more so happily established in these realms, taught in your ministration things heretical, false, and dangerous, thereby leading astray her Grace's liege subjects; and, besides your own guilt in this

matter, have likewise endangered the souls of the more simple people, making them, by your lies, to become subjects to the father of lies; so that your case is altogether like unto Berengarius, who did also, in the time of old, subvert and lead astray many of the true Church I would therefore counsel you, in all brotherly love and charity, as you have sinned like unto Berengarius; so, like unto him, and following his example, to repent you, and to recant you of your errors, while it is yet time; and in doing so, you shall render a grateful service to their King's and Queen's Graces of these realms, and you shall save your soul from the damnation of heresy: and the light of your candle, which hitherto hath been a foul and a false light, and very dusky, so that your candlestick is like to be removed, and to be toppled down, yea, that candle shall once more become a bright and a shining light, if that your heart do change; and then shall your tongue become as the tongue of truth, and your pen as the witness of the same. *Sin minus, veniam, tibi cito, et movebo candelabrum tuum de loco suo.*"

"May I ask," said Owen Wilford, "should I refuse compliance with what you will me to do, if my answers now given to you are to be brought against me? Do you now constitute yourselves to sit in judgment upon me?"

"No," replied Thornton; "nothing that you now say to us shall be brought against you. We have no notary here, as you see. We sent for you in brotherly love; and to act in conformity to that charitable doctrine of the Scriptures, which teacheth that he that shall convert a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul alive. You may answer without fear; for we are here, if possible, to save you, but not to betray you."

"And what follows," inquired Owen Wilford, "should I stand to the Truth, as I have hitherto done ever since it pleased God to make me his minister?"

"Rather say, if you persist in a blind, a benighted, and a miserable obstinacy in your stiff-necked and abominable heresy? Why, then, we must proceed to act with you according to the tenure of our commission; and appointing a day for your solemn examination, we shall try you in a spiritual assembly presently to be held in this city."

"Where you will condemn me to the stake," said Owen, firmly.

"As a filthy heretic," cried Sir John Baker.

"As a burning shame against the Truth," said Harpsfield.

"And if we then find you stiff-necked and obstinate," continued Thornton, "we shall proceed against you, to cast you out, to void you as a rotten member of the ministry, as one that teacheth the way to perdition, and must needs be lost; and after excommunicating you from the Church, and disrobing you of those garments that you have assumed as the cloak of iniquity, we wash our hands of you; we condemn you not, but we turn you over to the secular powers; we give you up to the laws, for them to deal with you after the requisitions of the statutes against heresy."

"That is, to turn you over to the powers of the Civil Magistracy," said Sir John Baker. "For, as my Reverend Friend, the Lord Bishop of London, saith, we of the Church touch the life of no man; we do not wash our hands in blood, though of the worst of sinners; we but turn them out as rotten-hearted heretics, that the laws of this country may do their part; which laws are most justly put into the hands of those who well know how to enforce them: and my Lord of London farther saith——"

"And my Lord of London, though he gives up such wretches and outcasts to the secular powers," said Harpsfield, interrupting the Justice, "yet he knows full well that there is but one way to quench heresy; and he recommends to the Civil Magistrate, that the utmost rigour of the law should be enforced, that the flames should consume their bodies, and thus, by destroying the wicked, to make the burning of them a pleasant and a sweet-smelling sacrifice at the altar of Truth."

"You are quitting the subject before us," observed Friar John. "We are here assembled to exhort this man to recantation, and to examine him on certain points of his faith."

Owen Wilford darted a severe glance upon Friar John. "Are you to be my examiner?" said he. "Then God help me! for I must look to be betrayed, indeed, if you are such.—But hear me. I am an Englishman, protected by the laws of my country, which, however they may be abused, still must they, in some measure at least, be outwardly respected, even by you. The marriage-treaty between our Sovereign Mary and King Philip of Spain expressly stipulated that no foreigner should hold any office in England. I therefore deny and refuse you, Friar John de Villa Garcina, altogether as a judge in the matter for which I am here brought before you. I refuse you as one who can have no lawful authority within this realm of England; and I make my appeal to Cardinal

Pole." And, saying these words, Owen Wilford took from under the sleeve of his gown a written paper, which he tendered to Thornton.

Friar John smiled maliciously, and only said, "How will you enforce your appeal, should I deal with you after the authority derived from his Holiness of Rome?"

"I renounce his authority, even as I do yours," replied Owen.

"Oh, be silent, my husband!" said Alice, who stood near him; "they may take notes of your words."

"I am assured they will not do so now," answered Owen; "and if they did, I would not gainsay them. Once more, I offer my appeal to Cardinal Pole;" and again Owen tendered the paper.

Thornton waved his hand. "We cannot admit your appeal," said he; "here is our commission, Look, it hath the broad seal of England. We are constituted by the Queen and Council, and also by Cardinal Pole, as legate *a latere* to his Holiness the Pope;" (at this mention of the Cardinal, all the Commisioners doffed their caps). "We now, therefore, proceed against you, *omni appellatione remota;* therefore we cannot admit it."

"And you may be taught even by me," said Friar John haughtily, "to feel the very power you refuse, should I issue a summons in the name of his Holiness of Rome, where you must answer before a higher court than this is."

"What!" exclaimed Wilford, "would you deal thus maliciously against me; and that even before I may be heard? I see that on all sides I am beset with malice. I will tell you how you would act by me, even as you did by my dear master, Cranmer. You hold me in your bonds; you keep me fast locked within your prisons; and you would now give me a solemn summons from Paul the Fourth, to appear before him within forty days at Rome; and whiles for my very bonds I could not obey it, at the expiration of the time you would condemn me for contumacy to the Bishop of Rome, cast me out, and give my body to be burned! You, Friar John—you, and all of you, did this to my master, to Cranmer; can you deny it?"

"Cramer was held in bonds as a traitor," said Friar John. "The laws of the country kept him fast for treason; but that detention could not interfere with his Holiness's right to summon him to Rome, to answer charges for heresy."

"But it could and did interfere to hinder him from going

thither to obey that summons," replied Wilford; "and so you condemned Cranmer, amongst other matters, for contumacy. Why, what a wretched subterfuge was this! You did it—that, if he escaped by the failure of one charge, you might still hold him fast by another. Is this to be my measure also? Is this to be my case?"

"You are in no evil case, if you follow the counsel now so charitably offered to you," said Thornton. "Will you sign this paper? Will you renounce your errors?"

"You go not well to work in what you come to do," answered Wilford. "You bid me sign a recantation of errors of which I have this day said nothing to convict me. This is justice, with something of foresight to boot, since it sees that which is not yet come to light."

"I revert to past things," said Thornton, who was willing to gloss over the haste he shewed in his desire to convict Wilford; "I had past things in my mind when I willed you to sign this paper. You spoke openly enough to me when I first saw you at your own house, in Wellminster; as these papers, containing the notes of your conversation, by my secretary, will bear witness;" and with that, Thornton turned over a bundle of papers that lay before him on the table.

"You were not then joined in the commission with your fellows in office to examine me," replied Wilford; "you came subtilely and alone; you came with an assumed air of moderation, on purpose to betray me."

"No, no," said Sir John Baker; "Thornton then came to arrest you, only to arrest you by my warrant, granted for that purpose by me, as one of her Majesty's Justices of the Peace."

"Which warrant," cried old Abel Allen, "saving your Worship's presence for being so bold as to speak, I can truly take upon me to say, your Worship did grant; because I know, that Sister Littlewit sold to Friar John sundry fat capons, ducks, and geese, that the Friar sent as presents to your Worship, before he called upon you to grant the warrant."

"What dost thou mean by that, thou scurvy knave," cried Sir John Baker, "thou prating fellow? Hold thy peace, or our next warrant shall be to commit thee to Munday Hole. Thou saucy fellow, thou, who bid thee speak?"

"Please your Worship," said Abel Allen, "I meant no offence, but I only spoke the truth; because, happening to be at Sister Littlewit's house when Friar John came to buy the poultry for your Worship, I helped to silence the quackling of the ducks and the geese for sister, by wringing their necks."

"And if Friar John did deal with thy sister for ducks and geese," said the Justice, "how came it, man, that you dared to suppose they were meant as bribes to me, as you would insinuate? I insist upon your speaking out the whole truth, for this is a libel on my character."

"Please your Worship," continued the sly old serving-man, "if you bid me speak the truth, it does not become a poor man like me to disoblige you. And as Friar John did tell sister that he wanted those ducks and geese to make a present to a certain Justice of the Peace who was no small fool, I thought it must be your Worship that he meant."

"You insolent knave you!" cried Sir John Baker, "you shall smart for this, I promise you."

"Please your Worship," continued Abel, "I mean no offence, but only to speak the truth as commanded."

"Put the knave in the stocks, Catchpole Miller," said Sir John Baker.

"And let him be scourged till his back bleeds, for such insolence," cried Harpsfield.

"He is not worth your notice," said Thornton, "for he is a fool as well as a knave. I shall call upon him anon in another matter. He will be as a witness concerning the prisoner."

"May it please your Reverence," said Abel Allen, "if you want me, Master Thornton, to give my old master a character, I am ready to do it now."

"Hold your peace, fellow," cried Thornton, "or it shall be worse for you. Speak when you are spoken to, and till then remain quiet;" and to Owen Wilford, he continued, "Do you admit our authority to examine you?"

"Do you now profess to act under the authority of Cardinal Pole as Legate to the Pope?" inquired Wilford.

"Undoubtedly," answered Thornton; "as in the absence of the Cardinal, I sit here to represent his commission as Legate *a latere*."

"Then I refuse you, too, as my judge," cried Wilford, "for my oath of allegiance has been made to the Sovereign of these realms, and not to the See of Rome. I owe you no obedience."

"But you must at least admit the authority of your lawful Sovereign," said Friar John; "if you refuse that, you become guilty of high-treason."

"I have never refused it," replied Wilford; "I acknowledge Mary of England as a lawful Queen, permitted to be such by Divine Providence."

"I take you by your own words, then," continued the Friar; "for lo! here is her Grace's sign-manual to our commission; and here also is the broad seal of England affixed to the same. Now, can you refuse submission?"

"I dare not," said Wilford; "I acknowledge that, as my sovereign, Mary has the power over me; and that you, acting under her authority here, stand in her place. Is that treason?"

"I trow not," answered Thornton; "and I am glad, right glad, to find you so comformable; and I nothing doubt but that you will presently bethink you of what is due to yourself in this matter, and will hear reason."

"God forbid," said Owen, "that I should be deaf to reason, since it is God's best gift to man. What would you with me?"

"I would now, brother," continued the artful Suffragan—"for brother I would still gladly call you—I would now ask of you certain questions touching your faith, that shall so far satisfy our minds that you are a brother of the Truth, and so justify our setting you forthwith at liberty, or else, by a full conviction of your errors, we may feel satisfied in our own consciences for referring you to the high assembly about to be held in Canterbury, there to take your spiritual trial before that solemn court. My first question will be concerning your moral conduct.—Bring forward that woman sometime called this man's wife."

Alice, who had hitherto stood between her son Edward and her daughter Rose, leaning from time to time on the one or the other for support, was now led forward by them. Old Abel attended as near as he could, and managed to fix himself close to the tapestry that hung athwart the chimney. Pincher still stuck to his heels, and once more quietly took his station at Allen's feet. Edward Wilford, who had not uttered a word (except now and then in an under voice, in the endeavour to support his mother's spirits) since he had entered the room, now ventured to request, in a respectful manner, that his mother might be indulged with a seat; pleading she was ill, very ill, as the motive for this request. It was granted; and Alice being seated at the table, with a countenance which sickness of body and anxiety of mind had rendered pale as death, waited in mute attention, impressed with the conviction that *her* hour of trial was at hand.

"The first charge we have to prefer against you, Master Wilford," said Thornton, "is one of a moral nature, and a grievous shame it is, and a blistering sore to the person of the Church, therefore is it in some sort a spiritual matter; since,

whilst a priest, you have long and openly lived with this woman, Alice Mordaunt, daughter of a worshipful knight, deceased, and sister of Sir John Mordaunt, still living, and an ancient knight of good standing in this county. What have you to say to this charge?"

"I say," answered Wilford, "that, according to God's word and ordinance, I married this woman more than thirty years ago; and I call upon her to bear me witness, that I have been to her a loving, and, as God knoweth, a faithful husband. I am, therefore, free from all sin in this matter. Alice, have I spoken truth?"

"You have, you have," said Alice; "and, if leading up our children in the service of God and the poor, in duty to their superiors, and in affection to each other—if that is the duty enjoined by heaven on a father, you have been in nothing wanting."

"Then you, Dame, also confess that you have lived with this man?" said Harpsfield.

"Ay, as his wife in all obedience, as I was bound to do, for more than thirty years," replied Alice. "We were married just at the time that King Henry——"

"That is sufficient," said Thornton; "you admit the fact; and our first business must be to proceed against you Dame, on this minor offence—for minor it is, when compared to the weightier charges that we have against the man. Know, that by the laws of the true Church, once more so happily established in these realms, if any priest holds a woman by the sacrament of marriage, such a contract is held null and void, and the issue of such a marriage illegitimate; and the woman so married stands in the case of a harlot or wanton person."

"My mother is an honourable woman—a wife by the laws of God and man!" exclaimed Edward Wilford; "and I will maintain her honour with my sword, whilst I draw breath!"

"Hold your peace, young man!" said Thornton.

"Or I will commit you," cried Sir John Baker. "You are here on sufferance."

"And are liable to the penalty of branding in the forehead for this interruption of the Commission," said Harpsfield.

"And must submit to the powers you cannot control!" exclaimed Friar John, as he looked with an air of contempt upon Edward Wilford.

"Peace, my son! peace, I conjure you!" said Owen Wilford. "Remember, I only consented that you should witness this scene on your promise of silence, let what would pass."

Edward bowed to his father, and was silent. But Rose ventured to speak; and she now did so with her accustomed shrewdness. "You have brought no proof, Master Thornton, of my mother's marriage; and I thought, in all cases of this kind, the law demanded a written document of a marriage, before it could be pronounced as void."

"Here be goodly gear indeed!" exclaimed Sir John Baker; "when a chittling like that dares to put in her word. But, as my friend Edmund Bonner says, these be times when women use their petticoats like a robe of authority, and prate of law, religion, and right rule, like a gownsman, or as if they were no more than matters of housewifery."

"Put her in the stocks, Sir John," said Harpsfield; "you have the power to do it for her impertinence."

"She is but a child," said Thornton, "and has been ill taught by her parents. The confession of your mother, damsel, respecting this her marriage with a priest, is sufficient. The law of the true Church, now established in England, holds no such marriage lawful."

"My parents were married before my father was in holy orders," replied Rose.

"So much the worse," said Thornton, "as it makes the sin of your father the greater, that he should enter upon the priestly office whilst living in a state contrary to it. You, Alice Mordaunt—for by that name alone can I call you—you must be content to undergo the sentence of the law, to do penance, at a time which shall hereafter be appointed, and in a place hereafter also to be named; and till the time arrives for the penance of your offence, as you are both sick and infirm, you shall not return to the common gaol, but shall rest a prisoner in my house, in company with certain other offenders of your own sex."

"And must I be parted from him?" said Alice, as she looked wildly upon her husband. "Oh! if you have any mercy, send me back to the prison, for there I did see him, though it was but for a brief space each day."

"We must not countenance any such abominable connexions!" cried Harpsfield; it is against the letter of our commission."

"Is there no remedy?" said Alice; and she burst into a flood of tears, as she added, "Then may heaven help me, and save thee, my dear husband, for we are like to have hard measure from these men!"

Rose pressed her mother in her arms; whilst Owen looked

tenderly upon his wife, and bade her, for the sake of their children, to endeavour to support herself. "For they may soon have no other parent, Alice," said he, "to whom they may look for counsel. For their sakes, Alice, I bid you be comforted, and to God I commit both them and you." Owen turned aside his head, as if fearful of looking upon his wife, lest the sight of her distress should shake that firmness of spirit he wished to observe in the presence of his enemies.

Thornton proceeded. "The second charge against you, Owen Wilford, is one that concerns your own family, as well as the church; for it should seem that, both in private and in public, you have read the Liturgy now prohibited—an abominable service, first introduced into these realms during the dreadful night of Error that held in darkness the light of Truth in the time of the late king Edward the Sixth, whom God in mercy to his Church has been pleased to remove from us, as the great stumbling-block to the salvation of his people."

"It hath pleased God," said Owen Wilford, "to take to his own bosom that sweet young prince, in whom so many excellences both of mind and body were united, that he was perfected in his course, and fit for his high calling even at an age when others do but begin to run their race. Spare the memory of Edward, as you would honour truth."

"This is no answer to the charge," observed Friar John: "Did you, or did you not, make use of such a liturgy?"

"I obeyed the orders of the late king," said Wilford, "when I took upon me the office of the ministry."

"What service then, and what doctrines, did you use and teach in your own family?" inquired Thornton, "for I come not yet to the matter of the Church."

"I taught them what I myself believed," said Wilford, "*Verbum Dei.*"

"You have brought your family here uncalled for," replied Thornton; "so you must not take it amiss, if I make them as a witness against you. I shall first examine your servant."

"Bid that old dog come forward," said Sir John Baker, "let us hear him."

"Is it me, or Pincher, your Worship would examine?" said Abel Allen; "we both of us serve the same master, and scorn to tell a lie."

"It is thou, thou knave;" answered Sir John. "Come forward fellow, and answer to what the Suffragan would desire."

"Marry, and that I will. I will answer his Reverence,

said Abel, "as he would have me; for I remember him, in old times, when he counselled me to obey my superiors; and cited, as an example for obedience, his Worshipful self. 'For look you, Abel Allen,' says Master Thornton to me, 'I be secretary to Archbishop Cranmer, and see how I obey him; if he does but wink, it is law to me.' Your reverence may remember when you gave me that good counsel, at a time when Bishop Cranmer was the king's favourite, and one of the greatest men in the nation."

"You have so good a memory, fellow," answered Thornton, "that I shall have little trouble in gaining a reply to my questions from you. What doctrines were taught in your family by that man you call your master?"

"Many, and good ones," said old Abel; "and especially, that we should be faithful to our masters."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Edward Wilford, "is this an inquisition, that my father's own servant, a poor and ignorant man, should be cited to endeavour to draw from him what would endanger my father?"

"Silence," said Friar John, peremptorily; "I command it:" and turning to Thornton, he added, "I would beg of you, worthy Suffragan, to let me examine this old serving-man, for I see he is cunning: Were you ever enjoined by your master to go to confession? Did he ever confess you himself?"

"In truth, did he," replied Abel; "for I remember, that when the ale turned sour, and nobody cared to say how it came to pass, master got the truth out of me; so I told him it lacked by some pounds the right quantity of hops."

"Pshaw!" said Friar John; "I do not ask you about ale and hops. Did he ever bid you seek a ghostly father for the confession of your sins?"

"Master never let us servants talk about ghostly things," replied Abel, "in his house; for he said that such stories did but frighten the maidens: and as to sins, the Lord help the man who is free from them!"

"Why, what a fellow have we to deal with here?" said Thornton: "you can make nothing out of him—let me try. Did you, Abel, ever hear your master read the mass?"

"That's a point I can't so well answer," said Abel, after a moment's pause; "for mass being a Latin lingo, I don't know what is, or is not, mass. But I often heard master and Mistress Rose read together out of a big book in a strange tongue; and it might be Latin or mass; all one for me, for I could not understand it."

"You will get nothing out of a sly old fox like that," said Harpsfield, "unless you give him a taste of the question;—that is a thing that makes a man understand any language after the first trial."

"It may do so with the people who speak the Spanish tongue," replied Allen; "but Englishmen are less apt scholars, Master Harpsfield."

"But what have you been taught to believe by your master, old man?" said Friar John: "Do you believe in God?"

"I do, most truly," answered Abel in a solemn manner; and he bowed his head as he spoke.

"That is the only answer you have given, that we can yet understand," continued the Friar. "Do you believe in the devil?"

"As plain as if I saw him before my eyes," said Abel Allen; and he looked the Friar directly in the face.

"You may question this man yourself, Thornton," said Friar John; "for he is too ignorant for me to deal with him."

"Have you been taught by your master to respect the laws?" inquired Sir John Baker. "Speak up, sirrah—speak up. I say, once more—Do you respect the laws?"

"Yea, that I do," replied Abel Allen.

"And do you respect the Church, and the Queen, and the Clergy?" said Harpsfield.

"And the Justices of the Peace, who dispense the laws?" cried Sir John Baker.

"I respect them all," replied old Abel; "and though a Justice of the Peace might bear the laws in paniers, like an ass, upon his back, still I respect them." And the sly old serving-man bowed with the utmost reverence to Sir John Baker as he spoke.

The Justice puffed, but did not like to understand the old Kentishman's insinuation; and Thornton, finding that he could make nothing of such a witness, bid Allen stand aside, and once more addressed Owen Wilford. "What service did you perform in your church of Wellminster?" said he: "I must beg you to speak plainly."

"The service of the Church of England," replied Owen, "in the English tongue."

"Then you renounce the Mass?" continued Thornton.

"I renounce it altogether," replied Wilford.

"Did you ever cause the rood to be honoured by your congregation? Did you make processions on Rogation, or Palm Sundays? Did you keep the vigils of Easter, and cause to be

represented the Resurrection in the eyes of the people? Did you present holy bread and water to the congregation? Did you——"

"I did none of these things?" said Owen.

"And why did you not?" inquired Friar John.

"Because I hold them to be not only childish and useless ceremonies, but also idolatrous, and contrary to the written Word," answered Wilford.

"I am sorry to hear this again, and thus openly repeated before the Commission," said Thornton. "You have already said enough to justify our committing you to take your trial before the Spiritual Court. I shall now but ask you one question more, and that is of the utmost importance. In what manner do you consider the real presence of the consecrated bread in the Sacrament?"

Owen Wilford turned towards Thornton, and was preparing to answer him with the utmost solemnity of manner and aspect, when Edward Wilford suddenly exclaimed, "Be silent, my father!—be silent! These men are assembled to betray you by your words, in order to render useless the appeal that you would forward to the Cardinal. I am sure I heard the movement of a pen upon paper behind that arras that hangs athwart the chimney. Some one is there concealed, and making notes of the examination."

"Take care, young man," said Thornton, "how you dare to accuse us of such baseness. Your father has our assurance that he may speak freely and in safety."

"Let me examine, then, behind the arras," replied Edward, "before my father proceeds to give his answer."

"You shall not!" said Thornton,—"you shall not! My word is sufficient, insolent young man! Who dares deny my word, or attempt to prove me guilty of falsehood?"

"None but a beast would dare to do as much," said Abel Allen. And, as he spoke, he quickly snatched hold of the open side of the arras, that hung down straight and loose before the chimney, accompanying the action with a low exclamation of "Hist! Pincher, hist!" And the dog, well trained and obedient to the least intimation of his master's will, instantly sprang behind the arras, and fiercely attacked some one who was there concealed; as the loud bark, followed by the deep growl of the animal, was accompanied with a cry for help. "Help! help me, for our Lady's sake! or I shall be throttled and a dead man!"

In a moment Thornton jumped up, Harpsfield did the

same, and Sir John Baker made an unusual effort at agility; but, in doing so, his own weight overpowered him before he could recover himself from a lateral movement by which he had lost his balance; and tumbling towards the chimney, he not only overturned a little table that had been stationed behind the arras for the service of the concealed notary, but upset the notary himself, who was still struggling to free himself from the dog. Nothing could exceed the confusion that now ensued. Sir John managed so far to get up as to remain seated upon the floor; where, wiping his face, and puffing and blowing, and swearing all the oaths he could possibly recollect at the moment ever to have heard sworn by Bonner in his hottest mood of passion, he gave way to a torrent of rage and fury. Thornton threatened to make this insult even a Star-Chamber business; Harpsfield roared out for branding in the hand, putting to the rack, and committing to Munday Hole, all in a breath; whilst Friar John stood still and said nothing, but glanced his dark eye upon Edward Wilford with peculiar malignancy.

Abel Allen ran towards the door, and in the confusion which prevailed, managed to open it to its full extent; and then, as if more desirous to secure the safe retreat of Pincher than for any other matter, he loudly called off the dog with, "Come off, Pincher—come off, I say!" and away ran Pincher after his old master's heels, bearing in his mouth the spoils of victory, which were nothing less than a sheet of paper that had lately been in the hand of the discomfited party, and which the noble terrier fairly carried off, by running down stairs with it in his mouth, as fast as his four legs could carry him. Abel Allen also thought it proper to retreat, before Thornton, or anybody else, could sufficiently recover himself to issue an order for his detention; and so losing no time, ere the Commissioners well knew what they were about, both the dog and his master managed to leave the house, and to set forward on their road to Sister Littlewit's in Canterbury.

Some degree of order was now restored; when the united efforts of Harpsfield and Thornton, who were both strong men, at length succeeded in once more getting Sir John upon his legs. The notary also now sneaked out of his hiding-place, his gown and tippet hanging ragged and tattered by his late contest with the victorious Pincher; but the blushes of his defeat were completely concealed, for his inkhorn having been overturned in the fray, the ink had found its way over his beard and face, and had so completely disguised him that

if, as it is said, blackness be the natural colour of the devil, it would now have been no difficult matter to have mistaken lawyer Cluny for that Prince of the powers of darkness; for Cluny it was, and no other, whom Thornton had thought proper thus to station in ambush to make notes of Wilford's examination for his own special purposes, in the hope that by inducing the unhappy man to believe that no note would be taken of his answers he might so effectually commit himself as to render all attempts in his favour with the higher powers wholly fruitless. Cluny's station had been convenient; as it must be remembered that the chimneys or fireplaces of this period were not only large enough to contain many persons within their ample space, but also poured down through their immense tunnels such a body of light that it was as easy for Cluny (when shrouded by the arras in front) to see to write the examination, as if he had received light from a window. The trick was now apparent, and filled the sufferers with indignation at the sight of so much treachery and art.

"Thornton," said Wilford, when the Suffragan had once more taken his seat, "base as I knew you were, I find you even yet baser than my worst thoughts could make you. You have this day meanly attempted to betray me by my own lips. You have broken faith with me."

"I was bound to keep none with you," replied Thornton with unblushing effrontery; "and in this matter you have had no means used towards you but what have been used also towards others in your case."

"The common practice of an act of treachery cannot justify its baseness," said Wilford. "I now remember me, indeed, that I am not the first man whom you have thus attempted to ensnare. The same trick was practised to betray the venerable Latimer, as he himself declared; I remember it but too well. But why should I strive with you?—You are here met together to compass my ruin. Do your pleasure then; I will submit to it."

"We can have no purpose to injure you, unless you injure yourself," replied Thornton. "I must do my duty, since you have already given me sufficient warrant to remand you to the prison whence you came. On this day month, you must take your trial in the Spiritual Court; there you cannot use evasion. Cluny, call in the officers. And for you, young man," continued the Suffragan, addressing Edward Wilford—"the part you have this day taken to insult our commission shall not pass unrequited. Our notary here has sustained

damage by the assault of a fierce animal, set upon him by you."

"Not by me," replied Edward; "I merely requested to be suffered to examine the arras."

"You were at least aiding and abetting," said Cluny; "and certainly a party concerned. The thing is actionable. I have sufficient evidence to prove an assault—and that assault too was made whilst I was in the discharge of my duty. Shall I call in the Catchpole?"

"Do so," replied Thornton. "You, Owen Wilford, must return forthwith to Canterbury Castle; and though, by the invalidity of your marriage, your children are held illegitimate, and therefore become as bond-slaves to the see of Canterbury, yet for the present your son is suffered to be at large. Your daughter shall have some indulgence, and may rest in my house to comfort her mother; for the woman is my prisoner till her penance be performed."

"Must my child—must Rose rest in your bonds?" said Owen Wilford.

"She shall not," exclaimed Edward; "my sister has committed no offence, and she shall be at large, or I will remain to protect her."

"She needs no protection here," replied Thornton; "nor do I stay the damsel as a prisoner. You may do as you list with her. I offered to keep her here but as an act of charity to that sinful and unhappy woman, her mother; who, you but now said, was grievously sick. Do your own will in the affair."

"Let Rose stay with me," said Alice: "let her stay to comfort me, since I must be a prisoner to this man; but surely the law, if law can detain me, would suffer me to go back to the same prison with my husband."

"The keeping you here, good woman," said Sir John Baker, who had by this time blown himself into something like a renewed supply of air for the purpose of breathing—"the keeping you here is quite according to custom; for it is a fact well known, that my Right Reverend friend the Bishop of London keeps many prisoners in his own house at Fulham, and has whipped several of them also with his own godly hands upon their bare backs, in his own garden. And some of these prisoners, as my Reverend Friend is alike an enemy to idleness and every other vice, he sometimes employs to assist in his hay-fields, and what not, as he may happen to need their services. The Suffragan of Dover, therefore, cannot do better

than to follow that great man's example. He is consequently quite justified in keeping you as a prisoner in his own house; for my Lord of London does the same thing at Fulham."

"I must submit," said Alice. "I beseech you to let me bid a last farewell to my husband and to my son." Alice arose from her seat; and, without speaking, she threw her arms round the neck of Owen Wilford, and burst into a flood of tears. Edward and Rose knelt down on each side of their parents; and, raising their hands reverently, implored their blessing. The Commissioners stood astonished at the audacity of these innocent and suffering people; but so deep was the passionate sorrow that now filled the hearts of the unhappy family, that even the Commissioners were for a moment overpowered by it, and they made no movement to part them.

"Farewell, my wife!" said Owen: "Farewell, my poor children! Pray for me, as I will do for you; and may God Almighty watch over you, and bless you!"

As he spoke, he looked first at Alice, and then upon his children! whilst he placed his hands upon the heads of the latter, and stood between them, old, venerable, and afflicted, presenting a spectacle of pious resignation and calm suffering, that might have moved a heart of flint to pity. But he stood before men whose breasts, steeled by cruelty and the fury of a bigoted zeal, were wholly incapable of remorse. At the present period, when such exertions of arbitrary power are unknown in England—when the glorious Reformation of the Church has established liberty on the surest basis, when rulers are no longer bigots, and subjects have ceased to be the victims of bigotry, such scenes of cruelty may seem but as the fables of a frighted and exaggerated fancy. Some even may say, could such things have been? But the still existing records of those times of terror prove, alas! that such scenes speak but a true tale, the remembrance of which must fill our hearts with thankfulness to that Almighty Providence who has freed us from those dreadful trials and perils that brought so many of our fathers, even in their gray hairs, with bitter sorrow to the grave!

To return to our narrative. Whilst Owen Wilford blessed his wife and children, not a tear was in his eye—not the least convulsive movement of strong, though suppressed feeling, agitated his frame: on the contrary, his spirit seemed to be sustained by a power more than human; and the religious fervour of his mind spread over his venerable and manly features an expression so noble, so elevated, that, whilst in the

very bonds of his enemies, he looked as if his soul had soared far beyond their reach, and all that is of earth, to hold communion with its Maker. His eyes raised, radiant with fervent hope; his cheek glowing from the enthusiasm of his feelings, the old man stood, like the Patriarch who offered up his son, his only son Isaac, to his God; as if he also was ready to make whatever sacrifice his heavenly Father should require at his hands. His children and his wife, awed by his manner, and by the expression of his countenance, knelt in silence before him, and scarcely drew breath, lest they should interrupt the least accent that fell from his tongue.

Owen bade them unite with him in a common petition to Providence for comfort and support in this their hour of sorrow; and that they might be ready and willing to follow wherever God should please to guide them, though it were to the very stake itself, for the glory of His name. His wife, his children reverently and devoutly joined with him in prayer, and repeated word for word after him as he dictated; whilst the Commissioners stood in a group together, at the farthest end of the room, looking on in silence at a scene that, in spite of themselves, they dared not interrupt. Some power, some feeling more mighty than that of their own bad passions held them back; and it was not till Owen had ended his petition, had raised his family from the ground, and embraced them severally in his arms, that they ventured to propose his removal from the house.

Edward offered his father in silence his arm for support. Owen cast a last look upon Alice and Rose, and instantly retired with his son, without uttering a word. The officers resumed their custody of the prisoner, when he was without the door of the apartment. After having received her husband's last embrace, Alice had stood, with her hands pressed together, almost stupified by the terrible prospect of this final separation. She did not change her attitude now he was gone; she seemed scarcely to breathe; but her eye wandered wildly from object to object; and when she heard the noise of the halberts and bills of the officers of justice, and the heavy tramp of their feet as they descended with Owen Wilford down the stairs, a frightful sense of her desolation seemed to burst upon her mind, to recal her to life. She uttered an hysterical cry, and fell down upon the floor in so strong a convulsive fit, that even the Commissioners thought the penance to which they had doomed her would be acted in another world. Rose, her child, now her only friend, her

only support, preserved her presence of mind in an admirable manner: for whilst the persecutors of her unhappy mother ran against each other, and shewed some distraction, not knowing what to do to save the life of their victim, that she might undergo her punishment hereafter, Rose suggested every remedy that was applied, with an extraordinary composure of mind; and at length besought the Commissioners that her mother might be removed to another chamber and be put to bed, assuring them, that unless this was done, and every care taken of her, she was sure her parent would not survive the day. She then respectfully begged Thornton to suffer her to attend her mother; telling him at the same time, with the utmost firmness, that if he denied these requests he must look to the consequence, as the law gave him no power over her mother's life. The Suffragan granted all she asked; and Rose was furnished with whatever was necessary on this sad emergency.

The servants who had assisted in the removal of Alice, had left the door open after them, when they quitted the room where the scene just related had passed. The Commissioners had not ordered it to be closed. There was a moment's silence amongst them; when Sir John Baker waddled towards the open door, and there stood snuffing for a minute, as if he was drawing into his nose some very acceptable perfume. He turned round to his companions; and the first words spoken after Alice's removal were by Sir John himself, who remarked with a smile, and a twinkle of his little eyes, "I think I smell the goose."

Nothing could be more just than this observation; for scarcely had it escaped the lips of the Worshipful Justice of the Peace, when a servant announced that dinner was served, and had been ready for some time; but the cook having received orders not to interrupt the Commission, the announcement of dinner was postponed till the departure of the prisoner. Thornton now requested every one present to partake of dinner; and all the party accepted the invitation except Friar John, who said he was obliged to attend Sir Richard Southwell, on some business of consequence; and bowing to the Commissioners by merely a slight inclination of the head, he departed, as they walked down to the dining-hall in the Bishop's house.

Few persons are insensible to the attractions of a well-spread table, and the genuine spirit of sociability which is inspired by good cheer, good wine, and a good appetite. All

the parties present seemed fully sensible of the value of these good things. Sir John Baker chuckled as his mouth watered at the savoury smell of the noble goose that had before attracted his attention, and which now stood before his eyes in the middle of the table, flanked by a dish of rich stewed venison, a mess of friar's-soup, and sundry other relishing dishes; whilst the roast beef of Old England—a dish as standard in Queen Mary's times as in our own—was placed, like the king of good things, at the top of the board.

Even Harpsfield, at the sight of dinner, managed to unbend one feature of his rigid face; and once or twice opened his mouth, and smacked his lips. Cluny had retired for a moment to wash the ink off his face; and returning into the apartment, well knowing his place, modestly took his station below the great silver salt basin that stood in the very centre of the table, as a line of demarcation to separate the plebeian guests from those of aristocratic degree.

Thornton tucked a white napkin close under his chin, and pronounced a Latin benediction upon the meats with his accustomed solemnity; whilst Sir John Baker, whose impatience to fall to could scarcely endure the length of the grace, stood casting an eye between beef, goose, friar's-soup, and venison, as if doubtful upon what good thing he should begin the premeditated attack. All the party now appeared, by a simultaneous agreement, to lay aside business for the present; and Queen Mary, and her fire and fagots, and Owen Wilford, and poor Alice and Rose, seemed to be as much forgotten as if they had never existed; whilst Sir John Baker stood up, and, brandishing a large carving-knife, prepared to anatomize the smoking goose, with as deep an interest, and as entire an absorption of all his faculties in this important office, as if life or death had depended upon his success.

Whilst jaws were going, knives rattling, and cups finding their swift circulation round the board, little conversation passed between the parties; for the English, at all times, generally discussed their dinner before they did their politics, or any other matter of regular discourse.

Sir John did honour to the goose, commended the stewed venison, paid his respects to the friar's-soup, but was perfectly charmed by a certain mess of fricasseed cocks-combs, which he repeatedly declared, averred, and protested to be the most dainty relish he had ever tasted in all his life. "Upon the honour of my knighthood," said Sir John, "whoever cooked that mess has the daintiest hand at a fricassee in all the king-

dom. I wish my Right Reverend friend, the Bishop of London, could only taste that dish: though, if he did, I question, Master Thornton, if it might not cost you the loss of the cook; for I verily think my Right Reverend friend would give the value of half of his diocese to gain such a king of the spit. With your good leave I'll take another taste of it. Done to a turn—spiced to a hair—the flavour of the ginger just enough to know there is ginger, but without being hot in the mouth. And then such a sauce! I question if twenty different ingredients did not go to it, to make it so savoury, so oily, so smooth, and so sweet to the palate. I'll thank you, Master Cluny, to send the dish forward this way, as I prefer helping myself:" and again Sir John renewed his plate, and his relish, and his warm commendations on the skill of the cook.

"I will tell you by-and-by, when the cloth is withdrawn," said Thornton, "by whom that dish was cooked. In the mean time, I beg of you, Sir John, and of you, Archdeacon Harpsfield, not to spare it, as it is no novelty to me—I have had many such dishes of late."

Neither the Justice nor the Archdeacon needed much pressing; and having taken as much of the mess as they could well manage to cram down their throats, they left a taste of the dainty for the attorney, and Cluny made a clean dish of it.

When the cloth was withdrawn, and wine, fruits, and spices were placed upon the table, Thornton dismissed the attendants, and the Commissioners seasoned their cups with a little more discourse than had yet passed between them: but Sir John, who seemed to relish good cheer even in retrospection, could not dismiss from his mind the mess of fricasseed cocks-combs nor the praises which he continued to think so well deserved by the cook. "Now the varlets are away," said the Suffragan Bishop of Dover, "I will tell you who cooked that dish. It was messed up by a woman that I keep as prisoner in my house on a charge of heresy—as obstinate a Lutheran, I assure you, as ever turned up a nose at his Holiness. But, seeing that she has good skill in these matters of the stew-pan, I make her useful in her vocation."

"You are quite right in so doing," said Sir John Baker; "my Right Reverend friend, my Lord of London, does the same thing. He spared that rascal heretic, Thomas Tomkins, till the hay harvest was got in, because the fellow did the work of any other four men put together in the field; and after hay harvest, Edmund Bonner burnt the rogue as he deserved."

"That will be the end of Mother Garnish," said the Suffragan, "the famous hand at a fricassee; for she will no more recant, she will no more turn from the fire, than she would turn a pancake before it is well browned. She is as obstinate in her faith as she is in her cooking, and will let no one advise her in either matter. You never saw such a determined old woman. But she must roast like her own meats, for recant she will not."

"It would be a great pity—it would be a most serious loss," replied Sir John Baker: "good cooks are scarce now-a-days—one don't now find half such good cooks as we used to do in my young days. The new doctrine of the Reformation has spoilt them; for your very dishwife now leaves her spit and ladle, and runs after these mad preachers (such as old Wilford) of the Truth, as they call it. And now, instead of the dainty omelets and nice fish dinners, that it was formerly quite a study to render excellent on fast-days, they never trouble their heads about the matter; and I have known some of these cooks so audacious as to send one up a half-raw beef-steak, even on a Friday, merely out of contempt to the Pope. These are serious times, Master Thornton—very serious times, and threatening to the country; and her Majesty, in her great nobleness, does most right in endeavouring to put a stop to them, to spread terror, as I would say, into the very hearts of such people; for, if she did not, there is no knowing where they might end, or what we might come to, when half-raw beef-steaks and cold mutton-chops would be thought good enough for the Magistrates and the Clergy."

"Ay," said Harpsfield; "and if these mad Reformers are not put down, every thing will be changed in England, a lukewarm spirit will spring up amongst us, and that under the name of mercy and charity, and all the strong supports of Government will be put down. We shall have neither the rack, nor fires, nor any other lawful engines allowed us as the chastisements of the people. They will tell us by-and-by that the gallows is sufficient punishment for any rogue. And the clergy will suffer too, if the new doctrines prevail. We shall have no offerings to images, no buying of pardons, no confession or absolution fees; as if we, the labourers in the true Church, were not worthy of our hire. Even a candle end, as Sir Thomas More used to say, will be grudged at the altar of a saint. But, a blessing on her Grace, sweet Mary of England!—she is the truest friend that ever the Roman Church could desire to support her cause. She will bring back the good old

times, and crush these peace-prating reforming rascals in the egg-shell."

"And well it is," cried Cluny, "that her Grace should do so; for if these fellows are allowed to spread their doctrines through the land, it will be a serious injury to the law; we shall have parsons making up quarrels instead of attorneys, and what they call equity will be held in more respect than the letter of the law."

"Her Grace is a blessing to the country," said the Suffragan Bishop of Dover: "she has shewn her great wisdom in nominating the right men in their right places, to be as the heads or polar stars to the Church. She knows who is proper for a Bishop; and, when there is no See vacant to fit the man into his place, she makes him a Suffragan Bishop, to wait a proper opportunity for his farther promotion."

"She is a rare Queen," cried Sir John Baker, "and stands amongst Queens, like a salamandered turkey amongst dishes —the crown of them all. I propose her health in a brimmer."

"With all my heart," said Thornton. "I'll never refuse a cup to the health of such a gracious Queen."

The cups were filled, and the health of Queen Mary was given and drank in such a hearty manner, that the dinner-hall rang again to the pledge. After the health of Queen Mary had been well washed down the throats of her admirers, there was one of those dead pauses in conversation that even now so often occur in an English assembly, to the utter astonishment of foreigners, and more especially if they be French.

But Sir John Baker, who could not forget the fricasseed cocks-combs, once more returned to the mention of the cook, as some relief to this solemn silence. "I have been thinking, Master Thornton," said he, "that, seeing how rare a thing now-a-days is a real good cook, it would be a great pity to lose such a jewel as you have in your house for a mere obstinacy of opinion, and the woman most likely is ignorant too; and, besides this consideration, the rabble make such an outcry about what they call the cruelty of the Commission, that I think it might be as well, now and then, just to please them in their own way, and to spare a heretic or so, to do an act they will call merciful: and you know, likewise, there is such a string of heretics to be burnt this sessions, that if you spare one out of the number it will not be missed.—What say you, Master Thornton? You may not like to keep the person you spare in your own house; but I shall have no objection to take her off your hands as my cook; for my own domestic in that

way gets very old, and seems to have lost the right trick of well larding a capon. So turn your heretic over to me, and say nothing about the matter, and I'll give you as many good dinners as she can sauce up for you, to shew my sense of the favour."

"I should fear to do so," said Thornton: "the thing is quite against the law."

"Pardon me for being so bold as to interfere in this business," cried Cluny; "but I think that I could find a precedent. Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, did the same thing. He spared a heretic that dished him up a dainty dinner at Farnham Castle—he spared her for the sake of her cooking; and she is alive at this moment."

"That's true," said Sir John Baker; "that's the best precedent you ever yet found, Cluny, either in or out of the law. I remember having heard Gardiner himself tell the story to my right Reverend friend, the Bishop of London, when he asked his Reverence to dinner at his house in Southwark, where he promised his dainty heretic should dish up a stewed carp; and we all ate of it together at that very house which was afterwards ransacked by the rebel Sir Thomas Wyatt—I remember it well."

"I cannot refuse such a precedent as that founded on any act of the late Bishop of Winchester, St. Peter assoil him," said Thornton. "So I have no objection, Sir John, to spare the cook's life, be she heretic or not, if we can but make some of the Canterbury brawlers believe that she recanted. For there are so many uncharitable ill-natured people, who would be glad to pick a hole in my coat (and I am not yet quite so elevated as the Bishop of Winchester was, who might snap his fingers at slander), that I must look about me and be careful."

"I think I could manage the business for you gentlemen," said Cluny, "and that at a small expense. I know that obstinate old heretic, Mother Garnish, very well;—she can neither write nor read. I will get her to put her cross (instead of her name) to a recantation; I can witness it myself: she will do this fast enough, if I tell her that the paper contains a confession of her belief in the Reformed Faith. That recantation, so signed and witnessed, will secure you, Master Thornton, from any unpleasant consequences, should the thing come to the Queen's ears by any meddling talebearer. And as the woman is a heretic, you know, there is no law that binds us to be very particular in what way we may deal with her; and, after all, she ought to thank us for playing her a trick to save herself from roasting, in order that she may roast capons. If

you like it, I will do the thing this very afternoon; for I always carry a few recantations, ready drawn up, in my satchel. They want only the signature and date, and the charge is but a trifle that I make upon them. Shall I go about it?"

The thing was applauded and agreed to; and Cluny left the party, to talk over the cook, and to get her to sign, by her mark, the paper she could not read for lack of that useful accomplishment, an acquaintance with the alphabet. And whilst Cluny was busied with Mother Garnish, Thornton, Harpsfield, and Sir John Baker adjourned into the garden of the Suffragan Bishop, to play a game at bowls on the smooth green lawn, kept in high order for that pastime.

And having said so much in this chapter about these worthies, Harpsfield and Thornton, as well as Bishop Bonner, we think that we cannot conclude it better than by giving a brief extract from "Fuller's Church History," wherein that admirable author gives a slight but expressive sketch of their several characters.

"In the diocese of Canterbury, Cardinal Pole appeared not personally active in the prosecution of any to death. Whilst others impute this to his stateliness, not stooping to so small matters, we more charitably ascribe it to his favouring the Protestant party, having formerly lost the Papacy under that imputation. But seeing it is a true maxim, which an heathen man layeth down—'It is enough for a private man, that he himself do no wrong; but a public person must provide that those under him do no injury,' I see not how the Cardinal can be excused from the guilt of that innocent blood, which Thornton, his suffragan, and cruel Harpsfield, his archdeacon, shed like water in and about the city of Canterbury."

Of Bishop Bonner, Fuller says—"Crosse we the Thames into the diocese of the Bishop of London, under Bonner, whom all generations shall call Bloody. St. Paul mentioneth his fighting with beasts at Ephesus, after the manner of men; which some expound, his encountering with people, men for their shape and sex, but beasts for their cruel minds and manners. In the same sense we may say that lion, tiger, wolf, bear, yea a whole forest of wild beasts, met in Bonner, killing two hundred in the compass of three years. No sex, quality, nor age, escaped him, whose fury reached from John Fetty, a lad of eight years old, by him scourged to death, even unto Hugh Laverock, a cripple, sixty-eight years old, whom he caused to be burnt!"

CHAPTER X.

SINCE the late interview with Edward Wilford, Sir Richard Southwell, to whom we must now return, had been much disturbed in mind. His fondness for his daughter, the dread he entertained lest the claim that Edward still made upon her, and her affection for him, should hereafter lead her to become the wife of a heretic, allowed him no rest. And even in the midst of these tormenting reflections, he could not think upon Owen Wilford, the father of Edward, now suffering in prison, accused of heresy, and liable to the severest penalty of the law, without a degree of sorrow and of pity, that was not the least of his anxieties.

Sir Richard was now seated before a table, upon which lay several books, writing materials, etc.; yet so little did he appear to be occupied with his ordinary pursuits, that he sat leaning his head upon his hand, apparently lost in thought; when the door of the chamber was softly opened, and Friar John stood before him. "I have been anxiously expecting you, Father," said Sir Richard; "for I need your counsel."

"I am come to yield it," replied the Friar; "and I guess upon what subject you would require my counsel — your daughter."

"Yes," said Sir Richard; her happiness is dearer to me than my existence; and what so lately happened has awakened my worst fears. Edward Wilford has renewed that claim, which the favour and the weakness of my poor wife allowed him to make upon Arabella when I was in a foreign land."

"It appears to me," answered the Friar, "a most extraordinary, I will not say sinful, act in Lady Southwell, that she should have encouraged, and have actually allowed, a contract to pass between her daughter and this young man, without previously gaining your sanction."

"It was so indeed," replied Sir Richard; "yet thus much even I will say in mitigation of what she did: Lady Southwell knew of the warm friendship that once subsisted between this young man's father and myself; she knew also how much I was bound to him, even by the strongest ties by which one man can be bound to another; she knew there was a time

when I prized Owen Wilford beyond all other men on earth, and, but for the difference of our faith, that I held him as a brother. On this account, therefore, in the first instance, she thought I should rejoice to see our children united; and when circumstances arose to make her believe that my consent would be wanting, the affections of these young people were so far engaged, that she had not courage sufficient to put an end to a connexion she had sanctioned in its bud, and she still hoped that my friendship for the father would induce me to relent."

"And how came you, Sir Richard," said the Friar, in a tone of considerable authority, "to form so strict a union with a man who was an enemy to your faith?"

"There you are in error, Father," replied Southwell: "Owen Wilford was not always what he is now. He was born and educated in the true faith. When our friendship first arose, he was a Roman Catholic; something lax in his opinions, I grant, but still within the pale of the true Church. Some years after, he was corrupted in Germany, by Luther's accursed doctrines; and there Cranmer took him into his service. I was absent in foreign courts when Cranmer fixed him here; and then began this miserable connexion between our children. You know what followed; I need not repeat it."

"I do," said the Friar; "but does your daughter not believe herself freed from that contract, into which she so hastily entered, by its having been annulled by the Legate of the Pope?"

"I thought, I hoped she did," replied Sir Richard; "but you were present when, but two days since, you heard the conversation that passed between me and Edward Wilford. He declares himself still resolved to claim Arabella; and I fear the worst, for I know my child has in her character much of the mild virtues, but also much of the weakness of her mother."

"And have you conferred with your daughter on this unhappy affair, since the morning that she met Edward Wilford in the park?" inquired the Friar. "Have you questioned her on the subject?"

Sir Richard Southwell looked confused; and turning to his Father confessor with an air of deep humiliation, as if he obliged himself to state a truth that it was painful to reveal, he said, "No, Father, I have not. I have feared to meet her, since I know what I must say; I know the pain that I must give to the heart of my child, and I have not yet summoned fortitude sufficient to do it."

"So!" replied John, "to save her a momentary suffering, you would expose her to that suffering which has no end. This is parental love of an extraordinary kind!"

"Spare me all reproaches, I beseech you," said Sir Richard. "I will, indeed—I will endeavour to be a man. Counsel me how to act; but spare, I entreat you, the feelings of a father."

"I must not—I dare not do so," replied Friar John. "I must not suffer the wound to fester for want of the probe, lest death ensue. I will not here repeat the past—you know it all. Believe me, you must act with resolution. There is but one way to save Arabella; for so long as Wilford lives, and she is free, he will never renounce her."

"What must I do?" inquired Sir Richard, with much agitation.

"Marry her to another," answered Friar John, "and she is safe: there is no other way to save her from destruction. The Queen has earnestly recommended to you Sir Francis Morgan. She has promised to take the charge of his fortunes herself. He is of an ancient and an honourable house; and, besides, you have in some measure pledged yourself to him."

"Not unless my child consented," said Sir Richard. "If her consent can be obtained, I grant that I have pledged myself to Sir Francis Morgan, and that by your advice, Father. For though I admit the truth of all that you assert, yet Morgan is not altogether the man I would have chosen for Arabella."

"I saw the necessity that such a barrier should exist between your daughter and Edward Wilford as would destroy his hopes of her for ever," replied the Friar; "and therefore I prevailed with you to accept him. You have sufficiently indulged the Lady Arabella by hitherto allowing her to reject every suit. The regard I feel for you, my concern for the welfare of your house, my duty as the spiritual director of your family, and above all, the deep desire which I feel to save her soul from corruption,—all bid me urge you to act as a man, as a follower of the true faith."

"I will endeavour to overcome this weakness," said Sir Richard Southwell; "I will see my child: but how can I bear to render her unhappy?"

"You must bear it, unless you strive to prevent the ruin that will make her so," said the Friar. "Would you give your child to the wolf? Would you suffer a creature so dear to you to be lost in body and in soul for ever?"

"No, no! I will not!" exclaimed Sir Richard. "I will act

this hour. I beseech you, Father, leave me, and send Arabella hither. I will give you a good account of our meeting. I will obey you."

"I expect it," replied the Friar somewhat haughtily. "For remember what you have to fear, and to whom you must render your account." He bowed and retired.

Not long after, Arabella entered the room. She ran towards her father, and following the dutiful custom of the period, threw herself at his feet, to beg his blessing on seeing him for the first time that day. Sir Richard looked with so much tenderness upon her that he could scarcely find it in his heart to distress her. Arabella was a lovely girl. Her form was fashioned in a mould of the most exact symmetry; and the extreme regularity of her features and the delicacy of her complexion were rendered yet more beautiful by the mild and amiable expression of countenance, that gave an interest to all she said or did. She was naturally graceful; and possessing every accomplishment which usually adorned the daughters of the higher orders of society at this period, a more lovely or engaging young person could scarcely be imagined.

Sir Richard Southwell bestowed upon his daughter the benediction she solicited; and before he withdrew his hand from her head, he stroked down the beautiful pale-brown locks which hung profusely about her forehead and neck, and looking stedfastly upon her, said, "My dearest heart! how much you remind me of your poor mother."

Arabella looked up; a tear was in her father's eye as he spoke. "And yet," he added, "you, my child, were the cause of the only disagreement that ever passed between us."

"You shall not speak of it now, my dearest father," said Arabella: "I see you are in a sad mood. What shall I do to pleasure you?"

"Be dutiful, my child!" continued Sir Richard. "That is the greatest pleasure you can afford me."

"I hope that I shall never lack duty to you, Sir," replied Arabella; "but let me endeavour to dispel this gloom that hangs upon you. What shall I do to divert you? shall I read to you one of your favourite books?" and as she spoke, she took up a volume from the table.

"No," said Sir Richard; "I am too much disturbed now to listen with attention."

"I will not read then," answered Arabella; "but do let me strive to divert you, my dear father, and to chase away this moody cloud that hangs upon your brow. I will try the power

of music, You loved once to hear me play on the virginals, as I sang to you one of your favourite airs. Music, even wise men say, can calm our disturbed passions; and whilst it thrills in the ear, it finds its echo in the heart, and awakens a corresponding harmony. I will endeavour to prove the truth of this assertion, and to chase hence the witch Melancholy by the simple spell of an old English air."

Sir Richard smiled affectionately upon his daughter; and Arabella, seating herself before her instrument, touched the keys of the virginals with a light finger, as she sang the following words:—

You birds, that raise your little throats,
With songs to greet the new-born year,
How pleasant sound your warbling notes,
How gay your plumage doth appear,
When, crown'd with flowers, the Spring is near!

You crimson rose, from yonder spray,
Whose breath revives faint Summer's noon,
How sweet your opening buds by day,
Or closed by eve's soft dew, that soon
Shall steal fresh beauties from the moon!

You clustering vines, that twine around
The trellis of my straw-roof'd shed,
How rich with you is Autumn crown'd,
When golden sheaves their treasures spread,
And ripen'd fruits blush deep and red!

You welcome holly, green and glad,
With your full berries sparkling bright,
When Winter comes all dark and sad,
You cheer the grove through day's cold light,
And deck our Christmas halls by night.

Flowers, berries, fruits, from Nature's hand,
In Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring,
Ye all are sent to bless the land,
And seasons, ever changing, bring,
The bounties of your heavenly King.

Whilst Arabella was singing, Sir Richard hung over her at her instrument with all the tenderness of the fondest father; and a father's pride swelled his bosom as he listened to the music of her voice. The feeling manner in which she sung, the expression of her countenance, and the taste with which she touched her virginals, so delighted him, that no sooner had she finished the air, and rose from her seat, than, throwing his arms about his daughter's neck, Sir Richard kissed her and exclaimed, "How can I bear the thought, that perfections such as these should be for ever cast away! Oh, Arabella, you do not know with what anxious thoughts I ponder upon what may be your fate when I am in my grave. A father's care looks

beyond the present hour, and would secure the happiness of its object when he shall be no more."

Arabella sighed deeply, for she guessed to what subject he was pointing, and, without giving him any answer, she only pressed her father's hand as she held it, and cast her eyes upon the ground.

"Arabella," continued Sir Richard, "your song has failed in the effect you desired it should produce upon me. My heart can find no ease till it has unburthened its cares to you. There is a subject upon which we must both understand each other. I will not be harsh, I will not upbraid you, but I must speak plainly; you have seen Edward Wilford?"

"I have," replied his daughter, and her eyes were still bent upon the ground.

"He has himself told me what passed at that interview," continued Sir Richard. "My child, I am not governed, as many parents are, by worldly motives. My desire is to preserve your happiness in a better world, as well as in this. You and Edward Wilford never, never, can be one. My child and the child of perdition never must unite in the sacrament of marriage. I am an old man, and the thought that possibly after my death you might become his, would disturb my last hour. I would see you married, the wife of a man of an honourable estate, and of the true faith; and then, Arabella, your father would gladly bless you, and breathe out his last sigh upon your bosom; for the greatest care he has in this world would then be at rest."

"My father," replied Arabella, "I have never dissembled. I have no purpose to act rashly or contrary to your desires; but, I beseech you, do not force me to wed where I have no affection. Let me rest as I am, and I will live for you. I will be, as my mother was to you, a friend, a comforter; I will do my best to take care of you in your declining years. If you need diversion, I will sing to you, and become, too, the companion of your more serious occupations. And I will pray to God that He may lengthen your days, and render their close calm and full of hope. Why should you wish to part with me?"

"I do not," said Sir Richard: "I do not mean to part with you—that is, I do not wish to part with you. But there are circumstances which render it prudent, nay necessary, that you should change your state. I have hitherto indulged you more than any other father would a child. All your suitors have been rejected; but there is one—you know whom I mean

—that her Grace, the Queen, has strongly recommended to me; and I am, in some measure, pledged to him. Will you consent to admit his claim?"

Arabella looked surprised; for Sir Richard Southwell, though he had often spoken of Sir Francis Morgan's suit, had never before ventured so directly to press it upon Arabella. "My father," she said, "you told me, but just now, that I reminded you of my mother; if I do so, let me beseech you to recall with her resemblance the recollection of her dying request to you;—that no force should be used upon my will; and that if I ever renounced the fulfilment of a sacred engagement, which had been sanctioned by herself, it should be solely in consequence of my own determination to that effect. This you promised to observe, so long as I continued to carry on no connexion, without your knowledge, with one unfortunate being. I have never broken my faith in this; for I do most solemnly assure you, that the meeting with Edward Wilford in the Park was purely accidental, both on his part and on mine. Forgive me, therefore, if I now say, that so long as I observe my promise, I hope you will not forget that which you made to my poor mother."

"I do not desire to forget it," replied Sir Richard; "I wish to lead, not to force your will. My anxiety to save you from the worst peril that could encompass my child, is assisted by one far more capable than I am of knowing what is best for you. I do not act without counsel."

"And why should you, Sir," said Arabella, "seek the counsel of any one to direct your will towards me? Follow the dictates of your own kind and generous heart, and do not give up your own authority as a father, or my reliance upon your goodness as a child, to the cunning or the malice of a tyrannical priest. I am sure it is Friar John who thus sets you upon the attempt to render me miserable."

"Silence, daughter!" replied Sir Richard; "I will not hear a man whom I think so excellent in judgment, and consider it a blessing to have near me, thus reviled. The Queen herself deems Friar John as one of the most able men in her cause; and in a great measure attributes to his exertions the happy prospect of once more establishing the true faith in these realms."

"Yes; but by what means does he hope to do it?" exclaimed Arabella. "Good God! when I think upon the blood that has been spilt; upon the numbers of those misguided, but still innocent victims, daily dragged to the stake, and by this man's

interference, I cannot see him without shuddering. Father, I am of the Roman Church as well as you are; but——"

"Holy Virgin! accept my thanks for that comfort," exclaimed Sir Richard; and he made the sign of the cross as he spoke.

"But if," continued Arabella, "I could believe that to be such demanded of me the shedding the blood of these innocent people, I would renounce my faith; though, from doing so, I should perish with them at the stake."

Sir Richard stood amazed at hearing these words; he was silent for a moment from mere surprise. "What do you mean Arabella?" said he; "surely Wilford has not already poisoned your young mind with his accursed doctrines?"

"I mean nothing but what I say," replied his daughter; "I would have all men free in conscience."

"Why, that is like the dangerous doctrines of these Reformers," said Sir Richard; "they artfully begin with that. Do you think me then cruel Arabella, because I look silently on, and see these things acted before my eyes? Alas, my child! you know not the mysterious, the awful, the terrible will of God: a heretic is worse even than fiends themselves in His sight, since they leave His established truth, they spurn His vicar here on earth, and do it under a pretext of perfect sanctity, on the assumption of a purer light than that by which even the saints of our holy Church are guided."

"That is Friar John's doctrine," answered Arabella; "and, whilst you declare it, your own heart, I am sure, renounces the barbarity it enjoins; you could never plunge your hands in the blood of innocent men, as that Friar does daily."

"I am not a chosen vessel to pour out the wrath of God upon these rebellious people," said Sir Richard; "I have not strength of mind sufficient to defy myself, my nature, to overcome the weakness of the flesh, as that man does, who, for the glory of his great Master's name, can do violence to every human feeling, can war against them all, and forget he is a man, to hold the strife of heaven. Yet I can see the necessity of such acts, and I can revere the strength of a courage that I could not imitate."

"Here is a book," said Arabella, as she again took up the volume she had before noticed, from the table, "that you once were apt to commend. It is the Utopia of your deceased friend, Sir Thomas More."

"And what of that?" inquired Sir Richard Southwell.

"Sir Thomas says in this book," replied Arabella, "that in

Utopia, freedom of conscience is allowed; and there men punish not for conscience' sake."

"The work is an imaginary one," said Sir Richard, "and so are many of the opinions it contains."

"Still it is looked upon as an excellent pattern for a state, replied Arabella; "and I cannot help thinking that, had Sir Thomas More in after-life but adhered to this rule, which he declared in his early days to be current in Utopia, he would have been a better and a happier man."

"Sir Thomas, however, thought more wisely before his death," said Sir Richard; "for no man was more bitter against heretics than himself. He did not spare them."

"He was as much, then, the slave of his mistaken zeal in this instance," replied Arabella, "as he was made the slave, or rather the victim, of the tyranny of his enemies. Sir Thomas died for conscience sake himself; such a spirit should have taught him to respect the truth of conscience in others."

"He fell a sacrifice, indeed, to tyranny," said Sir Richard; "but what has Sir Thomas More's memory to do with the subject of our discourse? Will you see Sir Francis Morgan? I ask you only to see him, to admit him as your suitor."

"What I have said of Sir Thomas More," replied Arabella, "is not foreign to my purpose, as I would make it but a prelude to a prayer I must address to you, to aid one who is also the victim of truth. Your ancient friend, the venerable, the good Owen Wilford, I have but lately learned, is to take his trial before the Spiritual Court for the sake of his faith. And I think that even you, my father, will admit, that Sir Thomas More was not a better or a wiser man than Wilford; though his virtues were more known, because they were exercised in public, yet both alike respected conscience."

"Alas! my child, what can I do for Wilford?" said Sir Richard; "my heart, my very soul bleeds with agony, when I but think of that man. But have I the power of God, to dispel the darkness which hides from him the truth? If I cannot do this, how can I serve him?"

"I do not know by what means you may serve him," said Arabella, "but I know you have much power; and having it, though Owen Wilford were a heathen—had he worshipped even the deaf gods of a Pagan idolatry, still you are bound to serve him. Will you, my father, reflect upon my words, and promise me to think upon some means to benefit him?"

"I have thought upon it already," replied Sir Richard. "and I will serve him, if my influence can avail with those

who have the power over him. But if I do thus much, will you promise to comply with my desires? Will you receive Sir Francis Morgan? It is all I ask of you. I will trust to time, to future circumstances, for your ultimate obedience, so you will but receive him."

"If you command me to receive Sir Francis in your house, my father," said Arabella, "I have no right, as your child, to refuse compliance; but beyond this, I neither can, nor will, pledge myself for obedience. Friar John shall not so far prevail with me, however he may dictate to you."

"Dictate to me, Arabella! he does not dictate to me; he but counsels me for your happiness, and for my own; and as he is my spiritual director, I must not turn a deaf ear to his persuasions. But of one thing I warn you—do not trust too much to my indulgence. I have hitherto left you to your own guidance, more, perhaps, than it was for your benefit I should have done. Yet there is one point in which I will be obeyed, so prepare your mind to meet it. If I once learn that you either encourage or receive Edward Wilford, without my knowledge, all forbearance on my part is for ever at an end. Sir Francis Morgan will be here to-day, and I look to your duty to receive him as my friend."

"As your friend I will assuredly receive him," said Arabella.

"And I trust," continued Southwell, "that you will let him hope for something more than your friendship."

Sir Richard Southwell, when he commenced these last instructions to his daughter, was standing near the window, and as he observed Friar John crossing the path that led to the house, the very sight of that awful priest, who had managed so completely to overrule Sir Richard's mind, inspired him with courage to address his daughter in a sterner manner than he had ever yet done on the subject of Sir Francis Morgan's suit. He soon after left Arabella, and went to render an account of his interview with her to his tyrannical Confessor.

When Arabella was left to herself, she sunk down upon the chair that stood before the virginals, and burst into tears. In the late interview with her father, she had spoken more boldly to him than she had ever yet ventured to do in all her life. But she now felt her heart sink within her at the prospect before her view; and bold as she could sometimes be in word, firmness of purpose was never a characteristic of Arabella's mind; so that, what with the weakness and wavering of her disposition, she was just that sort of woman who, in one of her

uncertain moods, might be led to do some act that would cost her the happiness of her future life. She had first connected herself with Edward Wilford, because her mother's approval had seconded her own affection. She had afterwards renounced him, because it was her father's will that she should do so; yet she held herself bound to Edward, because her faith was plighted; and, nevertheless, she had just consented to receive Sir Francis Morgan (while, at the same time, she made up her mind positively to reject him), because it was her father's wish. To crown the inconsistency of her purposes she determined never more to see Edward Wilford, but still to consider herself as under the most sacred of all engagements to him, unless he should himself release her from it—a thing she sometimes thought it would be her duty to desire him to do, —yet she was fully aware he would never consent to do it, without her demand of such a release could be accompanied with the assurance that she no longer regarded him. Such was the contradictory and wavering state of poor Arabella's mind, when she prepared to meet Sir Francis Morgan.

CHAPTER XI.

When Arabella was led into the chamber by her father where Sir Francis Morgan attended to receive this introduction, the extreme beauty of her person, arrayed in a suit of white and green satin, richly adorned with jewels, forcibly struck the admiration of the gay young man, who, for a moment, felt really surprised and overpowered by the modest beauty of Sir Richard's daughter. Morgan was without principles. He had been extravagant, yet he was not devoid of all feeling; and though not indifferent to the wealth and rank of Arabella, yet he really loved her—that is, as far as such a selfish being, the slave of every new passion, could be said to love; for, of that pure and generous affection which prefers the happiness of its object to every other thing, Morgan had not the most distant idea. His opinions also of women had been formed between the French court and the court of Queen Mary. He considered women therefore, either as light and coquetish, or as gloomy and morose; and generally finding that those of the latter class were often remarkable for nothing so much as stern manners and a forbidding exterior, he was much disposed to rank the lovely Arabella as nearer akin to the French than to the English court-ladies.

The reader has hitherto only seen Sir Francis Morgan with his low-bred and dissolute companion, Samuel Collins, or with the well-paid and artful instrument of his villany, lawyer Cluny. But if he should conclude, from such an association, that Morgan could not be a gentleman (at least in manners), he is much mistaken. Morgan, like many other young men of birth and education, who give themselves up to profligacy, had engaged himself with companions who had nothing but their vices to recommend them, and whom he internally despised whilst he constituted himself of their number. Proud of such an associate, they had yielded to him a supremacy amongst them, an obedience which, Morgan could not hope to exact from his equals. He loved to be the head, though of the worst company, and in return for such an election of himself, he sunk his manners with his society; so that Sir Francis Morgan, who was considered the pattern of an English gallant

whilst he visited the court of France, in an English tavern, bear-garden, bull-yard, or cock-pit, might be seen to rival with success the vulgarity of the professed sharpers and gamblers, whose language would need a glossary to any but themselves or the initiated few.

Sir Richard Southwell knew but little of Morgan's real character, as he had only returned to England after Mary's accession to the crown. And however much the young man might have indulged an evil disposition, since he had received the honour of knighthood from the Queen, and had aspired to the hand of Arabella, he had given up the more public haunts of iniquity, and had only indulged himself, like many of the Court, in private vices at his leisure, laying the whole weight of his apparent change of character to the account of a change of faith; for Morgan was a consummate hypocrite.

Friar John, it was said, had busied himself in the law affairs of this young man's father, Judge Morgan, assisting that learned dispenser of justice by expounding to him in what manner (in certain trials and cases) he ought to understand the law of the land, to make it compatible with the law of Queen Mary. Judge Morgan had proved a docile pupil, and particularly in the case of the lamented Lady Jane Gray, whose sentence of death he had pronounced, and, in requital for such good services, the Friar had promised to become a warm friend to his son, especially by using his influence with Sir Richard Southwell to gain his sanction that Sir Francis should attempt to win Arabella.

Knowing, therefore, but little of Morgan's former life; receiving in his favour the recommendation of the Queen, with such an advocate as Friar John to gloss over his vices and to describe his virtues, it is not to be wondered at, that Sir Richard Southwell looked upon him in a manner very different to what he really deserved. Consequently it was not without a feeling of peculiar anxiety that Sir Richard now watched the countenance of Arabella, in the hope to observe some favourable mark of pleasure on her reception of a suitor so much desired by himself for her acceptance.

Sir Francis was carefully and elegantly attired, in a style that his own vanity assured him could not fail to render him agreeable in the eyes of any woman; and he knew also, that his person, which really had some claims to manly beauty, could not be held as an obstacle to his wishes, were he the suitor of most ladies of his day.

Arabella received Sir Francis in a confused and agitated

manner, which Morgan's vanity interpreted favourably to himself; considering it the emotion of a bashful girl, who had been bred up in the country, upon first receiving a professed suitor, whose person and whose finished address inspired her with a feeling of his superiority. But Sir Richard, who knew the state of Arabella's mind, augured less favourably from it; and desirous to give his daughter time to recover herself, he entered into conversation with Morgan on many of the leading topics of the day.

Morgan had quick parts; he had travelled, and had gone through the discipline of a court: no wonder, therefore, that, Proteus-like, he could assume the form most in unison with existing circumstances. A court, also, had taught him to assume a virtue when he had it not; and now, whilst in the presence of Sir Richard Southwell, he conducted himself with that modesty, so becoming in a young man when he converses with his superior in age and station. It is true, the dissipated manner in which he had passed the best years of his life had not rendered him very competent in those accomplishments that are the result of studious application; but he had been a keen and a lively observer of passing objects—of men and things. He had also acquired that pleasing manner of saying something agreeable, even upon the lightest subject of discourse, which, with the world, procured for him the reputation of a general intelligence; so that, without such intelligence being founded on the basis of solidity, he often bore away the palm in society from those of his own age and condition, who really possessed ten times more knowledge than himself, but without having, in an equal degree, the art to turn it to account.

When people are pleased with the manners of a companion, they are seldom critically nice in inquiring into the cause; and if such a companion can please, without completely throwing the rest into the background, he is sure to be viewed with indulgence, and is often preferred to the learned and the wise, who may be wanting in qualities so generally acceptable to the self-love of others. Sir Richard Southwell, perhaps, without being conscious of it, was pleased with Morgan something in this way; and drawing in his own mind a contrast between the conciliating and pleasing manners of Sir Francis and the impetuous and somewhat haughty temper of Edward Wilford—a temper too honest to hide even its own failings, — he could not but rejoice, for Arabella's sake, that the opinion of Friar John, the recommendation of the Queen,

and, above all, the religion of Sir Francis, rendered him a more proper person for his son-in-law, than Edward could have been under any circumstances.

Another motive also assisted Morgan in gaining Sir Richard's good opinion, and that motive rested in the feelings of a father, for he wished to find the man he had selected for his daughter really worthy of her. He had gone too far under Friar John's directions to recede with honour, and his wishes now stepped in to conciliate his prejudices; so that he studiously sought to find every favourable point that might appear in Morgan's mind or manners; and Sir Francis (already tutored by Friar John, as to what line of conduct would become most agreeable to Sir Richard) was fully prepared to meet his expectations.

The Friar had now joined the party, and attended them into the dining apartment of Wellminster Hall, where he bestowed the Latin benediction upon the meats, and to this solemn preparation Morgan appeared to listen with the most decorous attention. The circumstance was trifling in itself, yet it was too important to be passed unnoticed by a man like Sir Richard Southwell, who, although one of the most priest-ridden bigots of the age in which he lived, was sincere in his professions of piety. He wanted but a better faith to become an example of all that is worthy of the most unfeigned trust in Providence.

After the dinner was concluded, amongst other topics of discourse, the spiritual assembly about to be held in Canterbury, under the Queen's commission, was named. Arabella, who had hitherto scarcely attended to the subject of conversation, now listened with deep interest. This topic had been artfully, nay purposely, introduced by Friar John; and as he mentioned Owen Wilford as the chief person who was to be tried for heresy, a deadly paleness overspread the countenance of Arabella.

Sir Francis Morgan, on hearing Owen Wilford named by the Friar, gave a gentle sigh, and shook his head with as well-acted a grace, as if he had been a finished performer of stage-plays; and said, with much apparent feeling, "I cannot bear to think of the approaching trial of Owen Wilford—it fills me with a mingled feeling of pity and of regret. He is the husband of my maternal aunt, poor Dame Alice; and it grieves me to remember that a man should have taken upon him holy orders, when unfitted for the office by having a wife. As a near relative also, I cannot but feel an interest in his cause.

and yet, I fear that I may myself be called upon as a witness against him, as I once heard him preach the most detested doctrines in his church of Wellminster. I hope I may not be called upon; but if I am, I must not hesitate between private affection and the public duty that I owe to the true faith and my own conscience."

"I am glad to hear you say so," replied Sir Richard; "since such a sacrifice to truth, as that of our dearest feelings, is what God demands, and what his vicar here on earth enjoins. Yet, I know the task is painful to act from conscience in opposition to feeling;" and as he spoke, Sir Richard looked with a peculiar expression of tender anxiety upon his daughter.

Arabella, in a timid manner, here ventured to speak, though but a few sentences, to Sir Francis Morgan. "I cannot think," she said, "that your conscience need oblige you to appear at all in the court against your kinsman: England is large enough—you might leave Kent till the trial is over."

Sir Richard saw the unfavourable turn the conversation was likely to take, and that it had already become really painful to his daughter's feelings. Desirous, therefore, of changing it, he struck upon the first topic which occurred to his thoughts, and asked Friar John if he could tell whether the Letter of Remonstrance, that had been sent by his Holiness of Rome to the Queen's sister, the Princess Elizabeth, was likely or not to produce any effect in leading her back to the true faith.*

Friar John shook his head. "I fear not," said he; "though it is difficult to pronounce an opinion, for the Princess Elizabeth is very subtle. She suffers the Mass to be read before her, though I never yet heard that she openly assented to it; and Feckman could make nothing of her reply to him upon the actual presence in the sacrament."

"I have heard," continued Sir Richard, "that the Count of Feria endeavoured to procure her excommunication from his Holiness Paul the Fourth of Rome."

"He did so," replied Friar John; "but his Holiness, in his great goodness, would not consent to it, but rather preferred addressing letters of remonstrance to the Princess Elizabeth, through the hands of Vincent Parpalia, the abbot of St. Saviour."

"I trust that the Princess will conform to his Holiness's desires," said Sir Richard, "otherwise it may hereafter be

* The letter from the Pope to Elizabeth here alluded to by Sir Richard Southwell, is given at large by Fuller, in his Church History.

grievous to these realms. And surely Elizabeth has suffered sufficient to learn humility."

"She bore her imprisonment in the Tower of London, and her confinement at Woodstock, with a stout heart," replied John; "in the latter place addicting her mind solely to study, and admitting no political discourse, nor any overtures whatever to be held out to her, without the sanction of her gracious sister."

"The Princess has been wonderfully spared," said Sir Richard; "for, suspected as she has been, and a known favourer of the Reformers, there are persons who thought (though I was never of their number) that her removal would have been but a necessary act to preserve the faith once more so happily established in England."

"It may seem harsh to hold by such an opinion," replied the Friar; "but it appears to many necessary, and it was perhaps the only act of weakness that ever King Philip committed, to persuade his royal consort to spare Elizabeth, and to give her freedom. But Philip is a man of many virtues—of great clemency."

"Pardon me, Father," said Sir Francis Morgan, addressing the Friar, "if I venture to differ from you in opinion on this point. I rather think his Grace, King Philip, was to be commended; and that sparing the Princess Elizabeth was, on his part, an act of the most excellent state policy; for should our present sovereign Mary (which Heaven avert!) die without issue, if Elizabeth were no more, the crown of England would revert to the brows of the beautcous Queen of Scots, whose late marriage with the Dauphin of France would render England the firm ally of the French people, to the manifest injury of Philip's father, the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and wholly against the interests of Spain."

"You are quite right, Sir Francis," said Sir Richard, "and you have placed this circumstance in a clear point of view. But, in all respects, I rejoice that the Princess is spared, though her existence has been the cause of many treasonable factions. And I shall always think that Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion was not merely to put aside the Spanish match of Queen Mary. There must have been some other motive for his conduct, though I wholly acquit the Princess Elizabeth from being a sharer in his treasonable practices."

"I have very particular reasons for thinking so myself," said Sir Francis Morgan in a mysterious manner: "I think, that to place Elizabeth on the throne, and to cast down Mary,

was really the end that Wyatt proposed to himself in his ill-fated attempt at insurrection; since, I grieve to say it, but I fear some of my own connexions had promised to join him, on the hope of such an issue."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Sir Richard, "I am astonished. Surely, you cannot mean the Wilford family? Owen has ever preached obedience to the existing authorities; that I will say for him. And as to Edward Wilford——"

"He left England exactly at the time Sir Thomas Wyatt failed, and was committed to the Tower," observed Friar John.

"Why, so he did," exclaimed Sir Richard Southwell; "but surely that failure on the part of Wyatt could not have been a motive for his sudden retreat. I thought it arose from a very different cause of disappointment;" and he looked with a scrutinising eye upon his daughter as he spoke. "I must beg of you, Sir Francis Morgan, to be more explicit."

"Pardon me," said Morgan; "you led to a subject of discourse that drew from me at the moment an unguarded expression. In short, I let fall what perhaps had better not have been named. Allow me to be silent; for remember my situation is one of peculiar delicacy, considering how nearly I am related to Edward Wilford himself. But—but I did not mean particularly to name Edward Wilford, when speaking of Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion; since, as I before said, I stand nearly related to him, and—"

"And he stands before you in the heirship to the Mordaunt estates," said Arabella. "I think, indeed, Sir Francis, you had better be silent for your own sake, for men might say that you had an interest in circulating suspicions and reports that might affect even his life."

Sir Richard looked displeased at hearing these remarks, somewhat severely given, from Arabella, and said, "I never yet thought Edward Wilford could have connected himself with a man like Sir Thomas Wyatt. If he did so, he must be base indeed, as I have always heard him exclaim against rebellion and civil strife."

"I am sure Edward Wilford is no traitor," said Arabella with considerable warmth; "I will answer thus much for him though I have not the plea of a blood relative, as Sir Francis Morgan might have, to make it my duty to vindicate his fame."

"The first duty of every man is to speak the truth," said Friar John, "since that constitutes our relationship to heaven."

"It does so," said Arabella, "and charity is the very soul of truth; it disdains all suspicion, all the half-spoken, half-insinuated whispers of malignity."

Sir Richard Southwell seemed greatly disturbed. He was anxious that Morgan should appear in the most favourable light to his daughter, and he saw that the conversation which had just passed was likely to injure him in her opinion. He said therefore—"Sir Francis, my daughter knows little of the world, and she thinks that relatives, in our times, should be to each other like the brothers in arms of the old chivalry, and take up the gauntlet in defence of their friends even upon the slightest occasion. Pray, therefore, satisfy her, and at once declare the innocence of this young man, who is your cousin, if you really feel assured of it."

"I am sorry that you touch me so nearly, Sir Richard," replied Morgan; "I can have no cause to desire to injure Edward Wilford; let us, therefore, say no more about the matter; suffer me to remain silent, as one unguarded expression has led to all this unpleasant discourse."

"You cannot vindicate Edward Wilford, then?" said Sir Richard; "you will not speak of him?"

"Rest assured," answered Morgan, "that if I could speak any good of him on this subject, I would do it willingly; and if I cannot, it is better for his sake to remain silent."

"You are generous, young man, very generous," said Sir Richard, "and I find that I have been greatly deceived. But I thank heaven that it is no worse. I will not press upon you any questions respecting a man to whom it is your misfortune to be related in blood."

"You do right, Sir Richard," said the Friar, "to spare Sir Francis Morgan's feelings on this point; and I think his delicacy is quite in character with the chivalrous ideas of honour you mentioned but now."

Sir Richard Southwell seemed for a time quite absorbed by the train of thought to which this discourse had given birth, and more than ever did he rejoice that Arabella had escaped such a man as Edward Wilford; while Morgan's affected reluctance to accuse his relative appeared to the prejudiced mind of Sir Richard as the act of an over-generous temper, fearful of injuring even an enemy, unless necessity demanded it.

Arabella still kept her seat. A deep feeling of interest seemed to fill her heart, and she could not conceal the indignation that Morgan's artful insinuations had raised in her

mind; for she scarcely deigned to reply to the conversation that he now addressed to her. At length Sir Richard Southwell recollected that he had some letters of consequence, connected with his public duties, that obliged him to retire for a while to his closet; and therefore proposed, whilst he was thus engaged, that Arabella and Friar John should conduct Sir Francis Morgan round the park and pleasure grounds of Wellminster Hall. Desiring, therefore, Morgan to take the charge of his daughter in the walk, Sir Richard withdrew.

Arabella, as she accepted Morgan's arm, shewed evidently that she did it solely in obedience to her father's commands; and the little party at once set forward on their walk. The conversation that passed was chiefly maintained between the Friar and Sir Francis, till the former, desirous to give his friend an opportunity of conciliating the disturbed feelings of Arabella, when they arrived near a part of the park which led to the village of Wellminster, pleaded that he had some business to transact in his new parish, and, begging Arabella and Sir Francis to keep near the spot where he parted from them, promised he would soon rejoin them, when he proposed they should all return in company to the Hall. Arabella, who never coveted the society of Friar John, nevertheless, at this moment, parted from him with reluctance, since she was still less disposed to remain alone with Sir Francis Morgan.

Sir Francis had now a difficult part to act. He was in company with Arabella, under the sanction of her father; the Friar had given him an opportunity, such as an allowed suitor would desire; and his mistress, who dared not leave him for fear of displeasing her parent, was sitting quietly by his side, upon a bench under the old oak tree in the park; yet in so disturbed a humour, with such severity in her looks, such coldness in her manner towards him, that even Morgan felt embarrassed, and he scarcely knew in what way to introduce his discourse. He was not acquainted with all the circumstances that had passed between Arabella and Edward Wilford; still, Friar John had communicated as much of them as he thought it prudent to trust to the knowledge of Morgan. For though the Friar had taken care fully to acquaint himself with the affairs of Sir Francis, he had not been so entirely communicative in return, giving his confidence but partially; for he well knew that people seldom keep the secrets of their friends quite so well as they do their own. Morgan therefore merely knew that Edward Wilford had once been induced to aspire to the hand of Arabella, but that his open profession of

the Reformed faith had rendered all attempts, on his part, to obtain the sanction of Sir Richard fruitless. But he was wholly ignorant that a mutual affection and a contract had ever subsisted between his cousin and the lady. Still, he remarked the warm manner in which Arabella had on that day endeavoured to vindicate Edward's fame; and Morgan knew the human heart well enough to feel assured, that, before he could open his suit with any chance of success, he must first attempt to remove the cause of displeasure, which appeared to lurk in the bosom of his mistress.

He now, therefore, reverted to the subject; and with an earnestness of manner that would have deceived any mind but one so prejudiced against him as Arabella's, declared that he lamented having unthinkingly uttered what might be deemed injurious to his cousin, and was evidently displeasing to herself. Arabella received his apology with coldness, and only remarked, that as he was so nearly related to the unhappy family of Wilford, she thought he had better employ his mind in considering by what means he could assist the distressed Owen; or, at least, to avoid doing them an injury, as he had hinted he might be summoned to appear as a witness on the ensuing trial.

"Believe me," replied Morgan, "I would gladly serve them if I could but find the means, consistent with the law of our faith; and, especially as it is your wish, since the happiness of my Arabella must ever be the first desire of my heart;" and Sir Francis ventured so far as to seize her hand and to press it to his lips as he spoke.

Extremely offended at the term of *my* Arabella, Sir Richard's daughter looked haughtily upon him, as she said with some spirit, "Not yours, Sir, yet; for, whatever compliance you may have exacted from my father, you have yet obtained none from me."

"I have obtained nothing but hope, I grant," replied Morgan; who now thought she was about to play the coquet with him after the fashion of the French court; for he never anticipated a serious objection on her part towards himself, after the encouragement of the Friar, and the sanction of the father had been obtained. "But surely, fairest Arabella," he added, "since I have been received at your house as an avowed suitor, now to despair would be unworthy of you and of myself. I cannot suppose you would give me such a reception, such a cause for hope, without the intent to realise it. And did I not hope, having gained so far a footing, I should want

both the feelings and the spirit of a man. You would not consent to allow me the happiness I thus enjoy by your side, did you hold me as a rejected adorer of your beauties."

"I thank you, Sir Francis," replied Arabella; "at least you teach me how I ought to act. I will relieve you of my presence at this moment;" and, rising from her seat, she prepared to depart.

"Nay, you shall not go — by heaven! you shall not!" exclaimed Morgan; and forgetful of the part he had but so lately resolved upon acting, he added, with the audacity that was natural to him, "I have your father's sanction, and you shall hear me."

"Shall!" exclaimed Arabella; "unhand me, Sir!—unhand me this instant! I insist upon returning to the house; you have no right to detain me."

A slight struggle now ensued. Arabella continued to insist upon being suffered to return; and Sir Francis Morgan to plead her father's sanction and his own vehement passion as an excuse for her detention; when, in the midst of this expostulation, a third person suddenly darted upon him from out a winding path in the wood that opened near the spot where he held the struggling Arabella. This person instantly interposed — tore Morgan from the lady, and bid him draw and defend himself. Arabella screamed,—Sir Francis looked up, and hastily laid his hand upon his sword, as he exclaimed, "Edward Wilford! Nay, then, it is time to think of my defence, if you are upon me."

Arabella, distracted with her fears, now ran between them, and scarcely knowing what she said, called aloud to Morgan, "Oh, do not injure him!—for God's sake, do not harm Edward!"

"Is it so?" said Sir Francis. "I see then what Edward Wilford is to you. This is no place for a brawl in the presence of a lady. But you know where to find me," he continued, addressing Edward, "if you would hear farther from me. This lady is under my protection by the commands of her father. I shall now return with her to the house, and I desire you to let me pass."

"You shall pass over my body first!" replied Edward Wilford—and he drew his sword as he spoke; then, going up to Arabella, he took her by the hand, and, turning to Morgan, added, "You shall not dare to touch her! She is mine, in the sight of God and man!"

"Yours!" said Sir Francis—and he added, with a laugh,

"Why, surely Edward Wilford, you are not going to play a knight of King Arthur's round table, and to carry off a fair damsel by the valour of your sword? Sir Richard Southwell has accepted me as a suitor of his daughter."

"Accepted thee!" exclaimed Edward; "he might as well accept a common dicer in the Marshalsea. But know from me, that Sir Richard has not the power to accept any one for this lady, since she is mine by a contract that exists between us; mine in affection—mine by her own consent. Arabella, have I spoken truth? Bear me witness, and convince this man of his folly."

"You have spoken the truth," said Arabella. "Sir Francis, I am bound, under a solemn contract, to this gentleman."

"Then why did you receive me to-day?" said Morgan, as his cheek flushed, and his eye expanded with passion. "Your father, at our first meeting told me, in your presence, in what light I was to be considered in your family."

"I received you but in obedience to my father," replied Arabella, in great agitation; "but——"

"And, in obedience to your father, I will not renounce my claim. In his name, Lady Arabella, I conjure you to return with me to the house."

"She shall not!" exclaimed Wilford. "I command you, Arabella, never more to hold intercourse with that man, unless you feel that I am discarded from your affections."

"You are a villain!" said Morgan.

"Defend yourself!" cried Wilford.

"Hold up your swords, for my sake! for heaven sake!" said Arabella.

"I repeat it! "cried Morgan, who now appeared half frantic with passion; "you are a villain and a traitor!"

"It is false!" said Wilford; "and I will prove it such on the instant!" Edward now darted forward upon Morgan, who stood on his defence, and some passes ensued, as Arabella stood screaming for help.

Her cries brought help indeed: for Friar John (who had met Sam Collins as he was coming to attend upon Sir Francis Morgan at the Hall) now ran up, and, with the assistance of Collins, parted the enraged combatants.

"Why, what is this?" said the Friar, with surprise.

"Nothing," replied Morgan, "but that this gentleman thought proper to insist upon it that a young lady who was in my company by her father's orders should leave me. And when he also thought proper to draw upon me and attempt my life, I could not but defend myself."

"You bleed!" said the Friar. "Why, what madness is here?" he continued, turning to Edward Wilford; "you have wounded your cousin."

"But slightly," said Sir Francis. "It is but a flesh wound in the arm; yet I owe no thanks to Master Edward Wilford that the sword had not passed through my body."

Samuel Collins heard this; and thinking himself perfectly secure by having the odds in his favour three to one, fancied he might as well shew a little spirit; so, blustering up to Wilford, he said, with a most insolent air, "What, Sir! do you dare, Sir, to attack my friend, Sir! I will make you to know that edged tools are not to be played with, Sir. I will revenge my friend, and meet you in any way you please, Sir, and give you the odds, and beat you into the bargain, though you now crow louder than any bird of the game."

"Keep the language of the cock-pit for the ears of your friend, Sir," replied Edward, "or I shall know how to deal with you."

Collins, who mistook the cool contempt of Edward Wilford for cowardice, grew more insolent. With his cap stuck on one side of his head, holding his arms a-kimbo, he came up close to Edward in a swaggering manner, and, looking him in the face, said, "What! you chicken-hearted fellow, you! you pretend to draw upon a gentleman, and dare not accept a fair offer; and when I told you that I would give you the odds into the bargain—Hang me, if I don't think you would turn tail and run away as a cur does before a mastiff. Why, I would box such a fellow as you are for a groat, and beat you with as much ease as——"

"As I now send you to the ground," exclaimed Wilford; and seizing Collins by the collar, he shook him violently, and cast him off with so much strength, that Collins measured his full length upon the turf. This assault passed in a much shorter space of time than has been occupied by repeating it; while Friar John was engaged in binding up Morgan's arm, that bled fast, and Arabella sat upon the seat where she had sunk down almost fainting with alarm.

Samuel Collins once more got upon his legs, and failed not to use them to advantage; for, running off as hard as he could, he went instantly to the house in order to give the alarm, by stating that Edward Wilford had set upon Sir Francis Morgan in the wood with the intent to murder him, and that this intended murder had only been prevented by the valorous interposition of himself and Friar John.

No sooner was he gone than Arabella guessed his purpose, and vehemently implored Wilford to leave the scene of contention. Even Friar John, whose policy recommended him to play the part of moderator in the presence of Arabella, seconded this advice, though Wilford seemed loth to follow it. Morgan still held his sword in the hand of which he retained the use. "I shall not forget this," he said to Edward—"I shall find a proper place and time to requite you."

Edward, who did not comprehend to the full extent the meaning that Morgan annexed to these words, answered, "At your pleasure, Sir Francis. I am often to be found amongst my father's old and faithful parishioners; and if you desire a more particular address, I am lodged with an honest widow, whose name is Littlewit, in Canterbury. I shall expect to hear from you."

"And you shall hear from me, when you least expect it," replied Sir Francis.

"Arabella, farewell," continued Wilford. "May heaven protect you! Remember what you owe to me."

Wilford retired through the wood; and soon after, Arabella was led back to the house by some of her father's servants, who had hastily run out on the first alarm spread by Collins.

Friar John was instantly closeted with Sir Richard Southwell. What then passed is not known; but it should appear that the Friar had given his own account of the transaction in a way highly favourable to Morgan, as Sir Richard ordered that Sir Francis should remain in the house till the following day, on account of his wound in the arm; and so greatly was he displeased with Arabella, that he refused to see her that night, and issued his commands that she should be committed to the custody of the ancient housekeeper, Mistress Deborah, who received a strict charge to confine the young lady to her chamber till Sir Richard's farther pleasure should be known.

On the next morning, after a long interview with Friar John and Sir Richard, Morgan returned to Canterbury, and forthwith despatched Collins in search of lawyer Cluny.

CHAPTER XII.

LEAVING for a time Sir Francis Morgan and Friar John to their plots, and the arguments by which they acted upon the prejudiced mind of Sir Richard Southwell, we must return to the afflicted family of Wilford. After what had so lately passed between Sir Francis and Edward, the latter expected daily to hear from his rival in a hostile manner, and he held himself prepared for the meeting; yet, from some extraordinary cause which Wilford could not even guess, he heard nothing of him. Morgan's violent temper, and the frequent quarrels and duels in which he had been engaged, were too well known to his cousin to allow him to suppose that any motive of fear for such a meeting could be the cause of his silence.

Edward had been taught by his father to consider duelling as little better than deliberate murder on the side of the successful party, and as rash, presumptuous, and an uncalled for rushing into the presence of the Almighty on the part of the fallen. Edward, therefore, was not a professed or an eager duellist; yet, notwithstanding his father's excellent instructions, he had once or twice in his lifetime (as in the late instance) been hurried away by his passions to forget the counsels of his parent. Still, in cooler moments, he endeavoured to subdue his feelings, and to regulate his mind according to that rule of action which had been so forcibly impressed upon him—'Thou shalt do no murder,'—a commandment so plain, imperative, and explicit, that there could exist no doubt in Edward's mind, when he calmly reflected upon it, that what was called the law of honour was in direct opposition to the law of God. Edward, therefore, although he could not make up his mind to refuse an honourable invitation of this kind, nevertheless resolved that he would not himself propose the meeting, more especially as he had so lately drawn upon Sir Francis Morgan in a moment of passion. This resolution may appear extraordinary in a young man of Edward's spirit; but be it remembered that he was the son of a reformed clergyman, who had early endeavoured to imbue

his mind with first principles, and that he was also a sincere Christian.

Another thing appears extraordinary;—that Sir Francis, having determined upon using the means within his power to attack Edward under the sanction of the laws, should now delay his purpose, and still suffer his cousin to be at large. But so it was, and circumstances hereafter to be stated may probably account for such an apparent inconsistency in the conduct of Sir Francis Morgan.

Alice continued in Thornton's house so ill, that she was merely able to leave her bed for a few hours in the day. It is true her health had long been declining; but no doubt can exist that the anxious state of her feelings, and the dreadful suspense in which she was kept as to the final issue of the charges brought against her husband, must have contributed to her illness; and possibly the removal from her comfortable home to the damp prison of Canterbury Castle, where she was first confined, in her state of mind and body, had also its share in throwing her into her present dangerous condition.

Rose, who was a most warm-hearted, affectionate child, remained with her mother by Thornton's permission; and it was most probably owing to her dutiful and unremitting cares that her mother was still in existence. Rose, like her mother, had keen feelings; but, unlike her, she possessed an extraordinary firmness of mind. She was one of those rare creatures, who could preserve both fortitude and calmness of spirit under the most afflicting circumstances, and who could maintain that power, of all others the most difficult, the perfect government of her mind. This was her day of trial, and she supported it nobly. With her mother, she was not only a friend, but a monitor; and, fearing the worst calamity might befal her father, she endeavoured gently to prepare his unhappy wife to meet it with fortitude, to regulate her feelings, and to bow herself with entire submission to the will of Providence.

In the few interviews Rose was allowed to hold with her brother, she forbore all complaints against Thornton, or the cruel enemies of her family, lest, by irritating his mind, he might be induced, in a moment of passion, to say or to do something that would injure himself, and could not possibly benefit his parents. When she was permitted to visit her father in prison, she preserved, whilst with him, even an air of cheerfulness, comforting him by an assurance that every thing was done that could be done to preserve the life of her mother, and always joining with him in his prayers that God

would in His own good time, shew mercy to His suffering people, and save them from the power of their enemies.

During her attendance upon her mother in the Bishop's house she had many interviews with Thornton. In all of these she preserved her self-command. When Rose thought that a favourable moment offered for entreaty, she endeavoured to use it for the benefit of her parents. She was respectful and calm in her deportment, even to this blood-thirsty persecutor of her family. But still there were moments when she told him the truth, and went so far as to say that possibly the day might come when it would prove to be his own interest, even in a worldly view, to shew some pity, some mercy to her persecuted family. And, with an undeviating firmness of manner, she constantly charged him to mind what he did to them, and not to venture one iota beyond the power that was given to him by the law in the execution of his office; since, if he did so, as assuredly as she then spoke to him, with God looking upon them both, she would herself hereafter call him to an account, should she live to do so.

Thornton, who was scarcely ever known to spare any one, appeared to be governed by some feelings, when in her presence, for which he could not account; so powerful, even with the worst, is the calm, steady, and unimpassioned superiority of a great and firm mind. Thornton, extraordinary as it may appear to others, and did even to himself, not only endured this conduct in Rose, but even shewed her a greater degree of indulgence than he was ever known to evince towards any other unhappy being within his power. He sometimes felt that he was even awed by her, and, angry with himself for allowing such a feeling to creep upon him, he made up his mind to treat her with the greatest cruelty. In contradiction, however, to this resolution, at other times he determined to endeavour to win her by the most unlimited display of affection, to corrupt her principles, and to destroy what appeared to him the proud and assumed innocence of her mind.

The vices of Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, had been notorious; so that, whilst he had assented to the persecution of the married clergy, and would imprison any poor wretch who was known to eat flesh on a Friday, he was said to be himself both a dissolute liver and a drunkard,* and Thornton in these vices resembled him.

Harpsfield, who under a hideous human form carried the

* Fuller, in his Church History, positively asserts such to have been the character of Gardiner.

spirit of a fiend, delighted in cruelty; and his hatred of whatever was good or amiable seemed to rise with the degree of excellence in the object. He hated Rose for the unbending firmness of her spirit, that had never once flinched, even before the cruel and blasphemous threats which he had used to overcome her strength of mind, and to produce a change in her faith. Harpsfield constantly reproached Thornton for his refusal to proceed against Rose as a heretic; and more than once entreated the Bishop of Dover, that if he would not himself deal with her in the matter, to turn Rose over to him. But Thornton as constantly replied that she was very young, and had been ill-taught; and that if, by giving her time, she could be brought round to the true faith, the firmness of her character would render her a zealous member of the church, and an honour to those who had succeeded in the work of her conversion under such peculiar circumstances.

Rose continued to comfort and to attend upon her mother, whilst Owen Wilford remained in prison at Canterbury Castle. At the commencement of his sufferings he was there cruelly treated; being thrown into a vault or dungeon under ground, in one of the towers of the castle, his legs fastened by a chain of iron to a post, with no other bed than the stone floor covered with a little straw. And so scanty was his allowance of food and of common necessaries, that if, at his advanced age, such sufferings had long continued, he must have perished from mere sickness and want, before the day of trial.

However, no doubt can exist that Sir Richard Southwell exerted his power, as sheriff of the county, to release him from this hard condition; since Owen was soon removed to an airy apartment in the Castle, and was continually supplied with many comforts, from some unknown source, which (as they came to him through the hands of the keeper of the prison) must have been one of great power, else would the conveyance of such supplies have involved both the donor of them and the keeper in a severe punishment, for thus affording aid to a heretic.

Not only comforts of lodging, food, and raiment, were supplied, but even pens, ink, paper, and books. The latter were certainly of the Roman-Catholic church; and Wilford employed many of his prison-hours in using the pens and ink, (not, perhaps, as it was supposed he might use them, to stir up friends to attempt his release), in writing comments, and in answering many of the false and bigoted doctrines contained in these volumes. At certain hours each day he was allowed

to walk in the court-yard amongst the prisoners, were, determined to use his tongue, so long as he was allowed to exercise it, to the glory of God, he entered into familiar conversation with any of the prisoners to whom he thought he could afford honest counsel or religious instruction. He reproved vice, he exhorted to repentance, he spoke patience, he commended industry, he preached submission to the laws, obedience to rulers, and, above all, an entire trust and resignation to the will of God. Such were his general instructions; and, fearing lest his mouth would be stopped in doing good to the suffering or sinful inmates of the prison if he publicly touched on doctrinal points, he was careful, whenever he endeavoured to support the courage of those who were in charge on suspicion of heresy, to give his exhortations in a low voice, and in a part of the court-yard retired from those who would have silenced him at once by the exertion of their arbitrary power and influence.

Yet his opportunities to comfort any of these unfortunate people were but few, since few of them were allowed the liberty of breathing the open air in the court-yard, and none (except himself) after they had undergone a preparatory examination before Thornton; as, if they would not recant after such an examination, they were instantly committed to Canterbury Castle, or to Munday Hole, a frightful cell of suffering, within the walls of the city.

We learn from the pages of Fox, that these persecuted followers of the Reformed church were generally placed in dark and reeking dungeons; that some were starved to death, and others suffered the most horrid and inhuman tortures, under the direction of Harpsfield and Thornton; but more particularly the former, who rivalled even Bonner himself in the wanton cruelty of his deeds. These accounts are so dreadful in their detail, that we here allude to them but in general terms, and gladly drop the curtain over scenes too revolting for retrospection.

Owen Wilford had been duly apprised of the time that he was to take his trial for his opinions, before the Spiritual Court about to be held in Canterbury; and as he was one morning engaged in making certain notes, which he designed should assist him in the answers he would probably be called upon to give on some important points of doctrine, he was surprised by the arrival of Thornton's secretary, lawyer Cluny, who, quite contrary to his usual method, accosted him with a civility of manner that amazed Wilford; and he proceeded to say

that he was commissioned by Thornton to invite him to the Bishop's house to dinner.

The surprise of Wilford was extreme; but, delighted at the hope which this extraordinary civility, and still more extraordinary invitation, gave him, that possibly he might, by accepting it, obtain an opportunity to converse with Rose, and even perhaps with Alice, he was careful in his reply not to offend Cluny, nor to reject the proposal, of which the secretary was made the bearer. Still, desirous to fathom the drift of Thornton's object in inviting him, after expressing his thanks for so unexpected a civility, he asked for what purpose it was shewn towards him.

"For the most friendly of all purposes, I assure you, Master Wilford," said the attorney; "for though, according to the strict letter of the law, as it stands in the statutes, revived in the second of the present reign. no person or persons accused of heresy can, may, or shall be suffered to stray, go, or sunder themselves from the officers or keepers having him or them in wardship on the aforesaid charge; still, under the Proclamation of her Grace, Queen Mary, a power is given, and to be holden, and may be used by the Bishops, Suffragan Bishops, or other persons acting under her Grace's Commission."

"I beseech you," said Owen, "be so good, Master Attorney, as to answer my question in plain terms; for I am an old man, having a weak head, that may not in a moment comprehend the terms of law, which, to my way of thinking, rather confound than assist the matter."

"Pardon me, Master Wilford," replied Cluny, "the law is precise, and every word carries a weight with it, without which the balance of justice could not be made up to turn the scale to the true poise."

"I am sorry for it," said Owen. "Since justice is a plain thing, being founded on the law of truth; I would that her words were as simple."

"Pardon me, Master Wilford," answered Cluny, "that would never do. Then we should have no lawyers. For you see, Master Wilford, the law having many clauses, sentences, terms, phrases, and recapitulations, every one of which hath a weight, the very difficulty of coming to a clear understanding of the meaning thereof, makes it necessary that the attorneys should have the handling of such matters, they being far beyond the comprehension, understanding, or explaining of the ordinary—that is, the vulgar amongst men."

"Have the goodness, Master Cluny, to keep to the point," said Owen; "for, as I think, that is a thing observed even in the courts of law, to hold to the matter in debate."

"Most true—most certainly it is so," replied Cluny; "all irrelevant matter being, as you say, inadmissible, and being held as much out of place as hearsay evidence, which is never admitted, except in cases of heresy."

"I am sorry it should be admissible in any case," said Wilford. "But what may be the Bishop of Dover's motive to invite me to his house?"

"The Bishop of Dover, as I said before," replied Cluny, "having resolved upon acting in your case, as he hath the full power to do, according to the tenor of the Proclamation, under the commission aforecited, can and will, for a certain space, take you out of this wardship, or imprisonment, and will remove you to his own house, there to be kindly entertained at his good pleasure; and his farther will and pleasure you will learn from himself, it being beyond my commission, and far wide from the letter of my instructions, to state the same."

"I will attend you then," said Owen. "I had, thank God! learned to rest satisfied where I was; but, if God wills it otherwise, I am also content. I suppose that the billmen will attend us, since I am not to be trusted, I conclude, to pass through the streets of Canterbury, attended only by you, Master Cluny?"

"Why yes, a few bills and glaves will bear us company, I must say," answered Cluny: "and Catchpole Miller goes along with us too, but only for form's sake. You know, Master Wilford, that the law hath many forms that must be obeyed, though the vulgar hold them but as lets, as hindrances to justice, delaying the same, and adding to the costs; but still, form being a decency, like a sober garment, or, as I would say, a cover to the law, it may not be dispensed with. Thus, these men bear us company only for form's sake, I assure you."

"I have no objection to it," said Owen. "We are enjoined by a wise and great Teacher, to submit to the ordinances of government, to obey the powers that be."

"A most excellent rule, certainly," cried Cluny, "and one that I always respect myself. I always obey the powers that be. Master Wilford, you may think perhaps that I am your enemy, because, in obedience to the powers that be, I was the other day obliged to see you secured by the leg in that cursed

damp vault (I beg pardon for swearing before a gentleman in a gown and tippet), but I loathe that dungeon so much, it makes me forget myself."

"Yet, Master Cluny," said Wilford, "methinks that I have most cause to loathe it, whom you put there; and surely the iron was something tight round my right leg, for I have walked lame ever since, as you shall see by the slow pace with which I shall keep you company in our walk."

"Pray take your time," replied Cluny, with much civility; "take your own time I beg, as Judge Morgan says to the Crown witnesses. But, as I said before, you may possibly think me your enemy for what I did; but I assure you it is no such thing. I merely obeyed my superiors, as I always do with pleasure, and as I should have done, had I been ordered to see you safe to your burning, or to set you in the stocks, or to set you free out of prison. I always obey the powers that be, with pleasure; as in duty bound, according to law and the Proclamation."

"You are happy in having such a uniform measure by which you can regulate all your duties," said Owen: "for myself, I am not so fortunate; for, when I have sometimes found a duty necessary, it has been also painful."

"That is because your duties do not belong to the law," replied Cluny; "for one of the chief beauties of the law is (as the learned Judge Morgan is wont to say), that it never troubles the conscience Catchpole Miller and the bills are ready: shall we set out for the Suffragan Bishop of Dover's?"

"By all means," said Owen; and they did so accordingly.

CHAPTER XIII.

If Owen Wilford was surprised by the invitation he had received from Thornton, he was still more so by the reception given to him by that reverend person, who now met him in a manner not only civil, but kind in the extreme. Even Harpsfield was social, as far as the brutality of his nature would allow him to be so; since his sociability, at the best, might alone be compared to the pacific deportment of a tame bear, whose savage aspect threatens and inspires fear, though the jaws of the ferocious animal may be muzzled and his paws held by a chain. Friar John was also present to give Wilford a welcome, which he did after the fashion of his country, blending haughtiness with gravity.

Sir John Baker welcomed Wilford, according to his way of thinking as a welcome can best be given, by offering him a share of the flagon of ale with which he was refreshing himself, after his arrival to meet Owen at the Bishop's. Wilford had come prepared, apprehending that he should be asked, perhaps, to hold a debate, in a more quiet manner than was allowed at his examination, on matters of theology. But to his amazement, not a word was said about the subject. He was kindly invited even to visit the sick chamber of his wife, —a wonderful permission, considering that she lay under sentence to do penance for having lived with a man who was her husband, though in holy orders. We pass in silence the affecting scene of this meeting between Alice, Wilford, and Rose, so much desired, and so little expected, by either of the parties.

After the interview was over, Wilford was led into the Bishop's garden, where he was shewn its "pleasant walks and long arcades;" and even Harpsfield offered to play with him a game at tables, if he would like to follow that pastime, when they should return to the hall; and Sir John Baker declared, that if lawyer Cluny would but stoop down to pick up the bowls for him on the green lawn, and run after and bring them back again from the jack, he did not care if he played with Parson Wilford for a rump and a dozen of Rhenish, in a neighbourly way; whilst Friar John expressed a hope that

the day would come when the Spanish and the English should be as one nation; and, to crown all, Thornton talked to Wilford of Queen Mary's great respect for his character, her earnest desire to promote him, and finally, asked Owen in what part of Kent he would like to have a good living.

Before Wilford, who was actually dumb with astonishment, could tell how to answer these extraordinary marks of favour, Sir John Baker, puffing and blowing, waddled up to his side, winked his eye, as he gave him a twitch of the sleeve, and said, "A word in your ear, Master Owen, for I have a hint for you that the Churchman dare not speak; but I am secular, you know, so I am not so meally-mouthed as they must be."

Owen, thinking to gain some explanation of this scene from Sir John, gladly drew with him aside, and said, "I shall thank you, indeed, Sir John Baker, if you will explain to me the cause of all these civilities, that you must suppose appear something strange to me, after what passed at our last meeting. Are your friends practising a jest upon me, or are they honest and sincere?"

"Honest as the day," replied Sir John; "sincere as if they were drunk—mean you nothing but good—nothing but what they say. And I will tell you all they mean, and more than they dare say themselves. And so you see—do you well heed me now?"

"I am attentive," said Owen.

"Why, then, you see," continued Sir John Baker, "if you have so great a fondness for your old dame there, as it seems you have, why, I don't know that we shall insist upon the penance."

"May God reward you for it!" replied Owen; "she is very sick indeed."

"Ay, she may die, like enough," cried Sir John; "and what if she does, man? there are more old women than one in the world, I trow! and if she lives, and your fancy holds to her, why you may still be allowed to keep her in a snug way, under the rose, as it might be, and it shall never be cast in your teeth to stand in the way of the Queen's preferment; for men are men, though they be Churchmen, as my Right Reverend friend the Bishop of London says, and so we must indulge them; and if they keep the thing private, no scandal falls upon the Church; and the Queen, bless her gracious heart for it!—she is no picker of holes in the garments of those she takes into favour. That's all I have got to say; and if you are a wise man, you'll understand me; for a blind horse may

find the stable, if you turn his nose in the right road for the door."

Here the Justice made a pause, having fairly talked himself out of breath. At length he regained sufficient wind to stammer out, with a chuckle, as he spread the open palms of his hands upon his 'fair round belly,' "Yonder goes the trencher varlet to Master Bishop, to say that the dinner is ready; so let us loosen our doublets and prepare. Come hither, lawyer Cluny," added the Justice, in a loud voice. The attorney was in a moment by his side. "Send back the people who came to me about binding over the 'prentices, for I really can't see them now."

"They have walked five miles to wait upon your Worship," said Cluny; "and perhaps they may grumble, and think it hard, to have to come the same journey over again to-morrow."

"That's their business, and not mine, Master Cluny," replied Sir John; "and as to their liking or disliking, what is that to me? I have business of importance, man—business; and so tell the rogues, and send them back whence they came.—And now, Parson Wilford, have with you to dinner, and you will taste as rare a fricassee of cocks-combs as ever you tipped over tongue. And such ale! mind that. Stick to the cocks-combs and the home-brewed, and I'll say you are a wise man."

The Justice led the way, Wilford followed, and all the party partook of a dinner that would have rejoiced even the citizens of London themselves, on the inauguration of their chief magistrate. After dinner the cup was briskly circulated round the table, and Owen Wilford remarked that his entertainers seemed to take unusual pains to press upon him a conviviality, that he deemed not only inconsistent with his calling, but also with the general rules of temperance and sobriety. He partook in moderation, both of the good cheer and of the home-brewed, so much commended by Sir John Baker, and of the excellent wines, but positively refused to go one cup beyond moderation; whilst his companions filled out and passed the flagon, more like heathens doing observance to the orgies of Bacchus, than as members of the humble and sober Christian church.

All the party except Owen Wilford were now well warmed with wine; for even the cool-headed Lawyer, and the cold-hearted Friar, had taken an extra cup upon this extraordinary occasion. At length Sir John Baker, who seemed to have anticipated, in these moments of conviviality, the purpose of his companions, managed to raise up his unwieldy bulk, and,

as he stood rolling (something like a heavy laden vessel, as she labours in a deep swell) from side to side, he extended a brimming cup in his hand, and after having bestowed a portion of its contents on the garments of Cluny and Harpsfield, as he sat between them, exclaimed, in a true tavern roar, "Here's to our new brother! I drink this to the joyful recantation of Owen Wilford."

Owen looked up in Sir John's face, as if to inquire his meaning; but the reiterated exclamations of the worshipful Justice prevented his speaking. In a moment the truth flashed across his mind; he had been brought hither, flattered, kindly entertained, and promises had been held out to him of the Queen's favour, the wine had been pressed upon him to unsettle or to stupify his intellects, and all to procure his desertion of the Truth. He was convinced it was so, but he sat still and said nothing. It seemed that his silence was very differently interpreted to what he designed; for even Thornton now touched upon the subject, and congratulated him upon his worthy, his exemplary, his wise, and his just obedience to her Most Gracious Majesty and the true Church.

Lawyer Cluny took the hint: inkhorn and pen were soon ready, for they were the lawyer's arms, his weapons, ever held prepared to do the work of his masters. He now shuffled in his pocket, and ventured to bring forth a written paper, and, with unparalleled impudence, laid it before Wilford, and bid him sign it. "You have only just to put your name at the bottom of the paper," said Cluny; "it is regularly indited, it wants nothing but the name and the date, and I will witness it; it wants nothing else—"

"But my consent to the same?" said Owen.

"Assuredly," cried Cluny: "your own free consent; no force is used, or the instrument would be invalid. You will have the goodness to sign your name."

"Not before I have read the contents of the paper," replied Wilford. All the party were now mute, attentively observing what passed. "Certainly," said Cluny, "that is quite legal. But I will save you the trouble; I will read it, if you please; it is quite a thing in the course of my practice; quite professional, I assure you." And he began to mutter over the open paper, as he held it in his hand.

"Pshaw!" said Sir John Baker, "it wants but the scratch of a pen. Can't you write your name, man, and save us the din of that fellow's tongue? Cluny's reading sounds worse than the gabbling of a flock of geese."

"I will spare you the hearing, and Master Attorney the reading of that paper," replied Owen Wilford; "since I must be allowed to read it myself, before I can be expected to add my signature."

"What! do you refuse to sign it?" cried Harpsfield; "then I know what follows."

"I have yet neither refused nor assented," answered Owen, "suffer me to read it;" and he took the paper from Cluny's hand.

A second pause ensued, whilst Owen was reading. He read the paper through with the most perfect composure, and, as it was now twilight (for being near the end of the month of October, the days were short), he had walked to the window, in order to see clearly the contents of the instrument. As soon as he had concluded it, Owen suddenly tore the paper, dashed it upon the ground, and stamping his foot upon it, accompanied the action with looking stedfastly at the Commissioners, as he exclaimed, "Thus! thus I trample upon the devices of Satan! and thus I cast him and you from me for ever!"

Wilford advanced towards the door, as if about to retreat; Cluny jumped up and interposed, and said with his accustomed impudence, "Shall I call Catchpole Miller and the bills?"

"Call whom you will," replied Owen; "I shall be glad to quit this chamber; for surely Satan is already here, and lays in wait to tempt me."

Cluny laughed, and said, "If it is so, he will not so easily let you go, I fancy, Master Parson."

"Bring the fellow, the filthy Lutheran, back again," cried Sir John Baker.

"He shall suffer for this insolence," said Thornton.

"Put him on the thumb-screw," cried Harpsfield, "and see how the hand that tore up the offer of the Queen's mercy will like that."

"He has rejected the offer of the Queen's mercy indeed," said Friar John, "and must expect none from us."

"I do not ask it—I had almost said I do not desire mercy from you," replied Wilford; "at least, not on such terms as you would give it me, to sign a solemn recantation of the Truth. This I will never do. I might have guessed the purpose of the hollow kindness you have shewn to me this day. I am not the first man who has been so beset, so tempted. But, I thank God, the deceit has not been prolonged; it has begun and ended in the same day."

"Have the rascal back to prison!" exclaimed Sir John.

"See him committed to the dungeon in the West Tower," cried Thornton.

"Bind him hand, neck, and foot, with irons," said Harpsfield.

"And I will take care," cried Friar John, "that henceforth no person, whatever be his power, shall interfere to mitigate the just punishment of such an obstinate, hardened, and abominable castaway as he is."

"Cluny, call up the billmen, and prepare to take him hence," said Thornton.

The lawyer departed to call up Miller and his attendants, as he was ordered to do. The affair instantly took wind in the house; and the circumstance of Wilford's having torn up and trampled under foot an offer of the Queen's pardon, on the condition that he would agree to recant, was soon spread and talked of all over the Bishop's house. Even Rose heard of it, and, anxious to see her father before he was once more carried back to prison, she rushed towards the room in which he was still held by the Commissioners.

Cluny was without the door, talking to Miller, and seeing Rose's intention to enter the chamber, he attempted to oppose her But Rose was a strong girl, as well as a spirited one, and without heeding the impertinent threats of Cluny, she endeavoured to push past him, so as to enter the room.

"Don't strike me, Mistress Rose," said the Lawyer. "You had better mind what you are about. Don't raise your hand in that threatening manner; don't shake your little fist at me: the thing is actionable, I assure you; and Catchpole Miller, who stands there, is liable to be called upon as a witness. You had better mind what you are doing—"

"Let me pass in to my father," said Rose; "I know nothing about your actions. I only know that you are a rogue as well as an attorney."

"That's a libel!" cried Cluny, "*scandalum magnatum*, and may be tried in the King's Bench."

"Let me pass in to my father!" again exclaimed Rose. "I have spoken nothing but the truth."

"That's the greatest libel of all," said Cluny; "for it is the chief beauty of our laws, that they will not allow truth itself to be spoken to the injury of character.—Catchpole Miller, you have heard her words. She called me a rogue to my face; be pleased to note the day of the month and the hour."

"And the time and the place," said Rose, "when I thus forced a villain to give me entrance to my father." And so saying, Rose put forth all her strength, suddenly seized the attorney by the arm, fairly got the better in the contest, and nearly upset the man of law (who loudly threatened an action for such violence), and rushed into the chamber. In another instant she clasped her father round the neck.

Wilford embraced her with the fondest parental affection; but so great was the fury of the wretches who had endeavoured to entrap him, that they grudged their victim even the melancholy solace of a last embrace of his daughter. Thornton gave the word to part them; and Harpsfield, who rejoiced to volunteer any exercise of cruelty, rose up, and tore Rose with so little consideration from her father, that in his violence, he actually struck her a blow upon the face. The blood gushed from her nose; and on seeing it, the inhuman wretch exclaimed, "I hope the next blood that I see of yours may flow from your heart at the stake."

"Monster!" cried Wilford—"for you cannot be a man to utter such a wish against this poor maiden."

"And if it should be so," said Rose calmly, "that blood shall rise as a witness between you and me at the last day.—Farewell, my father; may God comfort you, and be to you the same God of protection and of mercy that He was to Daniel, when that faithful servant was cast amongst the lions in their den."

"What do you mean by lions, Mistress?" said Thornton.

"Ferocious beasts," replied Rose, "whose nature it is, never to spare human blood."

"And do you dare to make us out to be such beasts?" cried Harpsfield.

"I leave that to God and to your own conscience," answered Rose. "Your own acts will tell you what you are.—My dear father, I—"

"Gag her, I say,—gag her!" cried Sir John Baker: and the inhuman Justice of the Peace put his hands before her mouth, and held them there till Owen Wilford was removed from the chamber. Scarcely had he quitted it, when Mother Garnish, the celebrated heretical compounder of fricasseed cocks-combs, came running into the room with a ladle in her hand, as if she had hastily quitted that employ, which, on account of her great skill in it, had saved her life, and instantly exclaimed, "Mistress Rose, go to your mother; for the poor Dame has heard of what is going on in the house about your

father, and she is fallen into such a fit, that burnt feathers put to her nose won't bring her to, and we do think she is dying."

Rose heard her words, notwithstanding the uproar that was still in the room. She suddenly tore herself from the hands of the Justice, who attempted to detain her, and with a speed that defied interruption, ran back to the apartment appropriated for the use of her mother and a few other female prisoners, whom, from some motive of policy or villany, Thornton detained in his own house—a practice that had been resorted to by Bonner also, in more instances than one.

The efforts of Rose succeeded in once more restoring the unhappy Alice to the miseries of life. In the mean time, Friar John had departed, highly provoked at the failure of the scheme that had been devised to procure Wilford's recantation. Wilford had been the bosom friend of Cranmer, and was believed to have assisted that great man in many of his works on the reformation of the Church. His character stood high for learning and for probity; and though he had been but the vicar of the small parish of Wellminster, he was well known and generally beloved in Kent. To procure his recantation was therefore deemed an important object, as the continual burning of heretics seemed rather to strengthen and confirm the doctrines of the Reformation than to subdue them. An artful plot had been devised to entrap Owen; and it is most likely the temptations prepared for him would have been much longer held out, had not Sir John Baker, when half drunk, prematurely introduced the subject of their meeting. The plot had failed: and Sir John now arose to stagger down stairs in order to mount his *moile*, attended by two of his domestics, armed with sword and buckler, to return to his own home; and here we shall leave him, a grievous burthen to the animal's back, whilst we return to Thornton and Harpsfield.

The latter now took occasion to observe (as he saw Thornton was greatly irritated) that the Suffragan's indulgence to Rose Wilford was much to be condemned. And he continued, by sundry artful speeches, to stir up strife, and to remind his companion of the insolent manner in which she had compared him to the beasts that were intended to devour Daniel. And Harpsfield even went so far as to say that if he should be questioned by her Majesty's council, or by Bonner, on the subject of Thornton's indulgence to this young woman, who was known to be a heretic and the daughter of a most contumacious offender, he should be obliged to speak the truth,

and to state how often he had vainly remonstrated upon the subject with his fellow-commissioner.

Thornton, greatly irritated, vexed with Harpsfield for the freedom of his discourse, angered by the late scene, and the failure of his scheme on Owen, was now worked up into a state of feeling equally various and wicked. He therefore resorted to a new means of cooling his passions by pouring cup after cup down his throat, whilst Harpsfield followed his example. Wine acts differently on different men, according to their dispositions. With some, it brings on stupidity; in others, it awakens mirth; this man it makes good-natured, and that man it renders brutal. So was it now with Harpsfield and Thornton: in the former it aroused the worst feelings of his naturally savage and surly temper; and in Thornton it gave birth to fierce and vehement passions. Harpsfield at length retired into an adjoining room, in order to write, as well as he could now write, an order to the keeper of the prison, to treat Owen Wilford with the utmost severity.

Thornton arose also to be gone; when, just as he opened the door, his eye glanced on Rose Wilford, who carried in one hand a small pitcher of water, and in the other a lighted candle.

"Where are you going, Mistress Rose," said Thornton, "with that stealthy pace like a thief?"

"To my mother," replied Rose. "She is feverish, and begged me to fetch her water to drink."

"Come in here, Mistress, for a moment," said Thornton, "for I must speak to you."

Rose hesitated, pleaded her mother's illness, and was about to pass on.

"Nay!" said Thornton. "If it likes you not to obey me, I will take care your mother has no more attendance of yours. And I will cause you to be locked up in Munday Hole for the night."

Rose, greatly alarmed at the thought that her mother might be deprived of her attendance at a time when she so much needed it, reluctantly obeyed, and entered the room as she was commanded. Thornton shut the door, took the pitcher and the candle from her hand, and placed them on the table. For a moment he stood silent, gazing upon Rose, as if he hardly knew his own purpose in having detained her. The recollection of the treatment that her father had so lately experienced at the hands of the Bishop, swelled with indignation the bosom of his daughter; and unable wholly to repress the

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Cluny, who was that moment returned, came in and told him that he had safely deposited Owen Wilford, according to the Archdeacon s directions, in a dungeon of Canterbury Castle.

"May God be with my poor father!" said Rose, "as He has promised to be with those who trust in Him. May He give him strength to bear the burthen He has suffered to be laid on His faithful servant!"

"You should have given your father better counsel, if you desired to save him," observed Harpsfield. "But, I see, you are like to follow his steps. Look upon me," continued the Archdeacon—"do you fear me?"

"Far less than I fear the man who has just left the room," replied Rose, "and who sent you to me. For I know you hate me, but he professed to love me."

Harpsfield now stood glaring with his fierce eyes upon Rose, whilst a savage exultation overspread his horrid features. "I see you will burn, you naughty harlot," said he, "for I know your faith; but I will put you to the trial. Here," he continued, as he drew forth a small cross from under his gown, "here, kneel down before that—declare that you believe his Holiness of Rome to be God's vicar here on earth; kiss the cross, or I will make you suffer."

"I will worship no graven image," replied Rose, "and I will acknowledge no power on earth that has not its warrant in the written Word of God."

"I see she will burn," said Cluny, who was still present; "that's a clear case—her own words are evidence."

"I will prove her," cried Harpsfield; "she will cry loud enough—ay, and disclaim her faith too, if a flame should but touch the end of her little finger."

"I will not, as God shall judge me," said Rose.

"I have almost a mind to try," continued Harpsfield.

"Do so," replied Rose; "put me to the proof; and if I once so far forget myself, to raise my voice against my Maker, hold my faith for falsehood."

"By the rood, I will make thee cry out then, and that lustily," said Harpsfield; "I will prove the harlot;" and he took the candle out of her hand.

"Holy Virgin—surely you would not," ejaculated Cluny.

"Peace, you knave," said Harpsfield; "I will prove the heretic by a fiery test!" And with these words, he seized Rose by the arm, and, holding her fast by the wrist in his inhuman grasp, with his other hand he held the flaming candle under her little palm, and let the fire do its work.

Rose stood perfectly still, holding the pitcher in her left hand, for it was the right which Harpsfield had submitted to the torture. She never spoke, not a sigh escaped her lips; but, raising her eyes upward, she seemed mentally to invoke the support of Providence. This done, she bent her head a little, fixed her eye on the ferocious Harpsfield, and stood with a noble constancy and an unchanged mien, in deep silence, enduring the burning flame. Not a nerve in her body appeared to be shaken; for, though the pitcher of water that she held in her left hand was full, not a drop of it fell to the ground.

Cluny, even Cluny, turned aside his head, as if ashamed to witness the scene; and Harpsfield, who had gone through the whole catalogue of tortures as an executioner, was astonished at such firmness of spirit.

At length the sinews of her hand, that were withered by the flame, cracked, and burst asunder. Rose only turned her eyes for a moment and looked upon her hand. Awe-struck, confounded, and even abashed by her magnanimity, Harpsfield dashed the candle on the ground, uttered a horrid oath, and walked towards the lower end of the room.

"Have you done with me?" said Rose.

"Yes! woman, angel, or devil—for I know not what you are," cried Harpsfield; "for something more or less than human you must be."

"I may retire then," said Rose, "and beg some one in the house for charity to look to my hurt. And my poor mother will be wanting the water."

"Allow me, Archdeacon," said Cluny to Harpsfield, "to beg old Martha, who has some knowledge how to treat accidents of this kind, to attend to the poor damsel's hurt."

"Do what you will," cried Harpsfield; "I care not what you do."

Cluny offered to assist Rose in leading her out of the room —for she still held the pitcher in the only hand of which she now retained the use; and turning to Harpsfield, she said, as she paused a moment before she passed the door, "This little quantity of water will, I trust, cool the thirst of fever. But not all the rivers of the earth could quench thy thirst, cruel man, for blood. This withered hand," she added, and raised it as she spoke, "shall write thy name in the book of perdition, unless it is stayed by thy repentance. May God touch your heart, and forgive you, for it is Him you have offended!"

CHAPTER XIV

THE course of our narrative now obliges us to return to Wellminster Hall, where, it will be remembered, Arabella remained in the custody of Mistress Deborah, the housekeeper, much in disgrace with her father, in consequenee of his having become acquainted with the circumstance of Edward Wilford's appearance in the Park, whilst she was engaged with Sir Francis Morgan. Did we here attempt to detail at large the various devices, schemes, and arguments, by which the Friar influenced the bigoted mind of Sir Richard, to the injury of his daughter, and the total ruin of Edward in his opinion, our task would find no end. Suffice it, therefore, to say, he so entirely succeeded, that Sir Richard was now convinced, that, to see his daughter secured by marriage from all possibility of hereafter becoming the wife of Edward, was a point even of religious duty. And so well had Morgan himself seconded the views of the Friar, that Southwell was also convinced that Sir Francis was the most proper person upon earth for the husband of his Arabella. For the deep cunning of the Friar, and the no less consummate hypocrisy of Morgan, had been employed to persuade her father, that they also acted from a generous principle in the hope to rescue her from ultimate ruin, from the loss of soul and body in eternity.

There was likewise such an apparent propriety in Sir Francis protesting, as he did repeatedly, that upon no account would he do violence to the feelings of the Lady Arabella; that he would trust to time and his devoted affection, as well as to her own return to a just view of the subject, when, he was sure, such was the goodness of her disposition, she would regard him with interest as the person who had been the means of saving her from the toils and the arts of a man who was dangerous to society, an outcast from the true Church and from salvation; for in what other light could Edward Wilford be considered?

Thus was Sir Richard made the tool of art and infamy, solely from having opened the way, by his own bigotry, to admit such men to his confidence. So that whilst he really

loved Arabella with the tenderest affection, and would have given his life to make her happy, he was actually pursuing the means to render her miserable during the remainder of her days. Governed by the advice of Friar John, since the late affair in the Park, Sir Richard had resolutely persisted in denying Arabella any private interview with himself. When they met, it was in the presence of the Friar, whose artful manner of maintaining the misunderstanding that subsisted between the father and daughter gave Southwell courage to deal harshly with Arabella—a conduct he could never have supported but for the insinuations Friar John threw out to the disadvantage of the former, and the authority he maintained over the mind of the latter as the spiritual director of the family.

Arabella saw herself enslaved by the arts of the Friar. She sometimes felt that she ought to resist them; yet she was one of those beings who can readily enough discern a right mode of action, but who have not resolution or firmness sufficient to practise it. Her gentle spirit bent before the strong passions of others; so that, like a fallen leaf before the winter's wind, she was wafted by their fury in whatever direction they pleased. Her fear too for Edward, lest he should be made a sufferer on her account, induced her to yield many compliances, which even Arabella, with all her weakness, would have shrunk from, had she not been governed by such a motive.

Beset by her father, the Friar, and Sir Francis, tormented with conflicting feelings between duty and affection, wavering and doubtful even in her religious principles, and unhappy in all the prospects that presented themselves whichsoever way she turned, there were times when she gave herself up an unresisting victim to misery, and she would repeatedly say to herself, "Let them have their will: no matter what becomes of me; I can scarcely be more wretched than I am."

Having thus far explained the motives that influenced both father and daughter, the reader, perhaps, will be less surprised to find that Sir Francis was now become a regular, acknowledged, and almost accepted suitor of the unfortunate Arabella; and that she received his visits, which were constantly made in the presence of her father and the Friar, with passive listlessness, as a prisoner receives the daily visits of his keeper, from whom he cannot escape. Arabella's state of mind had already affected her health; so that Sir Richard, who could not bear to see her pale looks, somewhat relaxed in his severities towards her, and once more allowed her the freedom of

the Park, under the guidance of Mistress Deborah, in whose fidelity he placed an entire trust.

Things were in this position, when, one evening, contrary to the usual mode of conducting the affair, Sir Francis Morgan surprised Arabella with a visit, whilst her father and the Friar were closeted together. Morgan, on that evening, was alone with her for more than half an hour, during which time Mistress Deborah (who was rather deaf) gained but little knowledge of what passed, by applying her ear to the door on the outside of the room. But certainly, at times, she did hear both their voices loud and high in debate, in a very different tone from what might have been expected, either on the part of an accepted lover, or that of his passive mistress. Soon after, the door was flung open with considerable violence, and Sir Francis rushed out in such a fury, that, running down stairs, he mounted his horse, which he had left at the hall-door, and galloped off towards Canterbury, without waiting to see either Sir Richard or Friar John.

In a few minutes after he was gone, Arabella also quitted the room, in order to hasten to her own private chamber; and Deborah observed that her cheeks were flushed, that she trembled extremely, but more, it should seem, with anger than from fear, since she cut short the old housekeeper's offer to attend her rather sharply, by saying she wanted not to be tormented with the presence of any one, and charged Deborah not to come near her for that night, accompanying the injunction with closing the door almost in her face. Arabella, however, often changed her mind, and now she did so very speedily, for, in less than half an hour, she called the old housekeeper to her, and with great kindness begged her pardon for what had so lately passed, and for her own hasty manner, which, she said, arose from having been unusually disturbed; and saying that on the following morning she would wish to speak to Deborah in private, she dismissed her with a good night.

On the following morning, however, at an early hour, she received a summons to attend her father and Friar John. She instantly obeyed it, and, to her surprise, found the former equipped for a journey. Sir Richard informed her that some business of a public nature called him suddenly to Dover, where he might possibly be detained two, three, or even four days; he could not specify the time, since it must depend on the nature of the affair, and the circumstances it became his duty to investigate. Friar John, he also informed her, was

obliged to set out immediately for Canterbury, to attend a meeting, to be held at the Suffragan of Dover's, on the examination of certain persons charged with heresy; Arabella would, therefore, for the present, be left to the care of Mistress Deborah.

It now seemed, that, whatever might have passed between the unhappy girl and Sir Francis Morgan on the previous evening, it had made a deep impression on her mind in his disfavour; since she implored her father, with tears in her eyes, that he would issue orders Sir Francis should not be admitted to her presence during his absence. Sir Richard could not deny this request, as it was sanctioned by common propriety; for, as he knew that the inquisition about to be held at Thornton's would much detain Friar John in Canterbury, it was obvious Arabella must be alone; delicacy, therefore, rendered her request both becoming and reasonable.

"You had better, Sir Richard," said the Friar, "also issue orders to your daughter, that she should confine herself to the house during your absence at Dover; for, remember, two interviews between her and that wicked heretic have already taken place in the Park."

"If you mean," replied Arabella, "between me and Edward Wilford, I can only answer, that those meetings were purely accidental, both on his part and on mine; there was no premeditation."

"And so they may be again," said the Friar. "I hope therefore, Sir Richard will do what is proper for your own peace and safety."

"Well, then, Arabella," said Sir Richard, like a boy repeating a lesson after his master, "I hope you will do what is proper for your own peace and safety, and not quit your chamber till my return. I shall not remain at Dover one moment longer than I find to be necessary."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Arabella, and she burst into tears as she spoke; for continual vexation of mind had harassed and weakened her spirits. "Am I always to be used thus? am I to become a prisoner in my father's house? is nothing to be trusted to my own sense of duty?"

Sir Richard could not bear to see her tears, nor her pale looks; and, rising from his seat, he said, with more kindness than he had shewn of late to Arabella, "Yes, my dearest child, I will trust to your own sense of duty, and what you owe both to me and to your present situation as it regards another.—Indeed, Father, she looks very ill; the air may be

necessary for her health. Deborah will take care of her; and I dare say that she will not go into the Park, but confine herself to the walks in the garden and the pleasure-grounds near the house.—Farewell, my dearest Arabella! I will trust you; and I am sure you will not abuse my indulgence."

"You have nothing to fear, Sir," said Arabella. "I hope I shall at all times remember what is due to you, in requital for this and every other act of kindness that I receive from you my dearest father. I shall be glad of your return."

The Friar appeared displeased; but Arabella's tears and pale cheeks for once rose superior to his influence with her father, who took an affectionate leave of his child, and soon after quitted the house in company with Friar John. That day passed without anything occurring worthy of note, except that in the evening the Friar sent a message to Arabella, stating that he was so deeply engaged at Canterbury, he could not that night return to Wellminster Hall, and also to inquire after her health, and if she had been out to take the air during the day. Arabella answered briefly, "that she had been so ill all day she had not quitted her chamber, and did not think she should do so till her father's return." So passed the first day of Sir Richard's absence from home.

On the morrow, Deborah, who loved Arabella better than anything on earth, having been her nurse in infancy, though afterwards promoted to the dignity of housekeeper, as a reward for her faithful services, at an early hour entered the apartment of her young mistress, with a view to inquire after her health. She found her up, dressed, and in tears. "Dear heart!" said Deborah, "how ill you look this morning! I thought the posset that I gave you last night, and that I made with my own hands, according to my poor lady's receipt, would have cured these megrims. But I see how it is," continued the old housekeeper, as she shook her head; they are driving it hard with you, my dear young lady, and you never tell me a word about the matter, though I am as anxious over you as a hen is over her chicken. And I am as close as oak too, as my poor lady used to say of me. But you never tell me a word of what's going on, though I know it all."

"Then, if you do," replied Arabella, "there is no need for me to tell you, Deborah, and I have many reasons that have made me silent to you."

"Well, we will talk about it in the garden," said Deborah; "for, I am sure, it cannot be good for you, nor for any gentlewoman, to sit here, as you do, mumping alone. So do go down

into the garden, and there we will talk of old times; and I will open my heart to you, as I have longed to do many a time for this age; indeed, ever since your poor mother died."

"No," said Arabella; "I think I shall not stir out of my chamber till my father's return; if it is only to shew him I can be trusted to my own discretion; though Friar John would persuade him to the contrary."

"Well then," replied Deborah, "if you don't go out, you will eat no more than a manchet of bread all this blessed day, as you did yesterday; and your father, at last, will be obliged to call in Doctor Argentine, as he has threatened to do long ago."

"I wish he would," said Arabella, mournfully.

"Why so?" cried Mistress Deborah; "I have a much better opinion of old Gammer Plaise, the village 'potecary. Why have such a conceit of Doctor Argentine?"

"Because I think he might kill me," said Arabella, "as he has done many a sick person under his care. I am sure I could forgive him."

"Dear heart!" cried the housekeeper, "to hear how you talk now! Do go out, and try the open air!" and again she urged Arabella to descend into the garden, but Arabella was positive in her refusal.

"Well, then," continued Mistress Deborah, "if you will not go into the garden, I must tell you something here, that, I think, will fluster you a good deal. Friar John charged me, that if any letters came for you, in your father's absence, I was to be sure to give them to him; as if, indeed, that I wanted to be told by him how I was to act! If he had held his tongue, I should have kept them, perhaps, till Sir Richard returned; but I am determined to give them to you, if it is only to contradict the Friar. I have got a couple for you, and you shall have them yourself, if it is only to spite that proud, meddling Spanish Friar, who treats me no better than if I handled a mop and pail, like Molly the scrubbing wench."

"Give them to me!" said Arabella eagerly.

"There's the first," replied Mistress Deborah, as she presented a letter to Arabella. She opened it carelessly, after looking at the superscription, read it, and threw it down upon the table, with a 'pshaw!' peevishly expressed.

"Why, I hope there is nothing to offend you in it," said Mistress Deborah.

"No," replied Arabella; "it is only a tiresome letter from the old Lady Lacklocks, who wants the patterns and the name of the fashioner who made my last suit of pink taffeta."

"Lady Lacklocks may have the fashioner's cut," answered Deborah, "and the patterns too; but she can never have the youth and the pretty looks of my dear young lady, that makes them both seem so rare. Here is the other letter."

Arabella took it with indifference; but no sooner had she cast her eyes upon it, than she turned white as death. Her hands so trembled that she could scarcely hold the paper; and sinking into a chair, she could only ask Deborah, "who brought that letter?"

"Why, Tommy, the blind boy," said the housekeeper; "I saw him lurking about under your window as soon as I was up. So down I went, and I made him tell me his business, and give me the letter for you. But I hope there's no harm done, and that you won't tell Sir Richard or Friar John, if I have done wrong."

"No, never! never!" Arabella replied hastily. "I beseech you, Deborah, go and get me a glass of fresh water. Do leave me, for a moment, to myself."

"I will go and get you some of my own drops," said Deborah; "they always revive me, if I am fluttered with scolding the maidens when they vex me;" and she instantly quitted the chamber.

Arabella eagerly opened the letter, and read as follows, in the greatest agitation:—

"My dearest Heart,—It may be, you will tell me, that I ought not to indite these to you. Arabella, I must see you! and I now do most solemnly conjure you, in the name of your dead mother, that you will come to me as soon as you can on receiving these. I shall abide your coming at the foot of your mother's tomb in Wellminster church. Her spirit, perhaps, will look upon us. The sanctity of the place I have named, will suit with the occasion that makes me now call upon you, for God's sake, not to deny me. It will also prove to you my sincerity, when I say, that an awful cause exists to render such a meeting necessary. Tommy, the blind boy, has got for me the key of the church, from Gaffer Turf, the sexton; and as Friar John is busied at Canterbury, he will not be in the way to interrupt us. I only ask you to see me for a few minutes. I am a broken-hearted man—do not make me a desperate one. Comply with this request; it is most likely the last that will be ever made to you in this world by,

"Dearest heart, the unhappy

"Edward Wilford.

"I write these in the park, under the old oak-tree, as blind Tommy waits by me, to take the same for you."

No sooner had Arabella finished this letter than, starting from her seat, scarcely knowing what she did, she hastily snatched up her mantle, put it on with all speed, and was advancing towards the door, when Mistress Deborah returned with the water and the drops. "Why, what, in the name of all the saints, does this mean?" exclaimed the housekeeper, with surprise.

"I must go out this instant!" said Arabella; "I must and will!"

"And who wills to stop you, sweetheart?" cried Mistress Deborah. "But only stay a moment, and I will put on my cloak and muffler, and just give directions about dinner, and just see the chickens fed, and a few other things done, and then I'll go along with you myself."

"No, no," replied Arabella; "I will not be delayed; I must go this instant."

"Tilley-villey!" cried the housekeeper; "why what a weathercock we are this morning! Just now there was to be no going out till Sir Richard came back, forsooth; and now, it is out we go, and away! without with your leave or by your leave. But you forget, Mistress Arabella, that your father left me as the most properest person to take charge of you, and, trusting to my prudence, desired me to look to your goings in and comings out; but I begin to suspect that all is not right in that letter."

"Dear Deborah," said Arabella, "I am sure you will not join with Friar John to make me unhappy. You used to love me like your own child, and you are now just doing what would please the Friar when you thwart me. Has he instructed you to treat me so?"

"He instruct me, indeed!" cried Mistress Deborah, with indignation at the suspicion of such a thing. "No, my young lady, I would have you to know that I want no meddling Spanish friar to dictate to me; but, as Sir Richard left you in my care, I, as a prudent person, must know where you would be going, when you are in such a mighty hurry that you cannot stay for me to go along with you."

"You shall know, Deborah," answered Arabella, "and I will promise you to return in less than an hour: I am going to Wellminster church."

"To Wellminster church!" exclaimed Mistress Deborah; "why, what should you go there for?"

"I am going to my mother's tomb," replied Arabella.

"To your mother's tomb," said the housekeeper, greatly

softened by the recollection of her deceased lady.—"Oh, my poor dear Mistress, how often I think upon her!—Well, Arabella, if you go there, no harm can come from it; I will not thwart you—indeed, I could wish you to go there, and to-day. Friar John is absent, and your father too; so, now is my time to speak freely,—and there is something that I must tell you, it hangs on my mind till I do it; and, I think, when you have been to look upon the spot where my poor lady's remains must rest till the last day, you will be better prepared to hear me. You will not stay long?"

"No, certainly I will not," replied Arabella; "and after my return I will listen to all you may have to tell me."

Deborah kissed her young mistress; and Arabella drew her mantle close around her, and set off with the utmost speed for the church of Wellminster—reproaching herself, all the way she went, for an act of positive disobedience to her father, so contrary also to every determination by which she had resolved to regulate her conduct during his absence, and yet wholly unable to resist the extraordinary appeal Edward Wilford had made to her feelings.

The church of Wellminster stood apart from the village; so that any one, by following a particular pathway in the Park, could enter the churchyard without passing down the village street. The church, as we have before stated, was of Saxon architecture. The spring, famous for its miraculous powers in the Gothic ages, and in honour of which the holy fane had been erected, rose not far from the spot; its pure waters ran sparkling and murmuring from their source, as they glided into a little brook that brawled along the wood, and visited in its course the neighbouring hamlet.

A row of tall and luxuriant elm trees, closely planted around the four sides of the churchyard, cast a deep shade upon it, and by presenting their barrier of thick foliage and long branches to intercept the full splendour of the light of day, they gave a melancholy and sombre air to the spot, which was consecrated alike to the use of the living and of the dead. Here, too, many a noble and ancient yew tree spread its mantle of dark green foliage above the lowly grave. A cross, beautifully carved in stone, and surrounded at its base by a few steps, stood immediately opposite the entrance of this consecrated ground, where the rank grass, weeds, and wild flowers, grew about many a mound of earth that contained a poor and now nameless inhabitant; whilst they seemed as little to respect the more costly marks of mortality, where a

flat or an upright stone, with the words *Hic jacet* engraved under a death's head or that of a cherubim, spoke an ambition so natural to man, to leave, though but a fragile one, some record of his name—this record, in many instanees, after a few years, being the only visible memorial that such a creature as it describes had ever been, "to strut and fret his hour upon the stage," and then be seen no more.

There is a serenity, a silence, and a heart-speaking solemnity in the view of most country churchyards in England, that few persons can witness without finding its sympathetic influence steal upon them; and the young, the gay—even the thoughtless, cast a look upon the "lap of earth," the dark and forlorn tenements of death, and give a sigh to the transitory visions of their own mortality. The happy are depressed by a sight that reminds them of their end; but the miserable generally feel a relief to their own burthens in a contemplation of the same objects. So was it with Arabella; for as she walked hastily along the little footpath that had for ages been trodden by successive generations, many of whom now rested near the same spot, she thought how vain were all the anxious toils, the heavy griefs of this world, and how soon a few feet of clay would resign them all to nothing.

She had nearly reached the church-porch, whilst making these reflections, when, as she drew nearer, she heard the cheerful whistle of a youngster who was sitting on a bench within it. The boy started up, but did not turn his head towards her, as he said, "Is it you, Mistress Arabella?"

"Yes," replied Arabella: "poor Tommy! how gay you are, and yet you are blind."

"But I can hear, and walk, and whistle," said Tommy; "and I can make baskets too, Mistress Arabella; and so, you see, I have plenty to make me happy."

Arabella only sighed, and without speaking entered the church. She now turned into the aisle where Lady Southwell had been buried, and where the tomb and monumental effigy had been erected to her memory. All was still and solemn, and the subdued and softened light of day, that stole into the church through the deep glories of its painted glass, added considerably to that imposing effect, which the "long drawn aisles," the massive columns, and the fretted arches of a Gothic edifice never fail to produce on a mind of any feeling. Seated upon the step at the base of the tomb, Arabella beheld Edward Wilford. His head was reclining upon his hand; he seemed musing. As Arabella approached, he rose up, but the

shade of deep melancholy, the solemnity of a sorrow too big for utterance, was strongly impressed upon every feature, nor did even the appearance of Arabella produce the least change in his countenance. His spirit, high and generous as it was, seemed to be completely broken; for instead of speaking to her, he burst into tears, and suffered them to flow on without an effort to repress them.

Arabella had seen her father as he watched by the corpse of her mother, before the body was removed for ever from his sight, and she now thought that Edward Wilford looked as he did then—looked like the broken-hearted mourner, when that chill and heavy word *dead* strikes upon his ear; as if the gate of hope was closed by that of the tomb. Arabella felt certain that something extraordinary indeed must have occurred, but she knew not what it was, and she feared to ask; she stood, therefore, silent before Edward, waiting till this burst of passionate sorrow should subside and allow him to address her.

At length he did so, and endeavoured to overcome his emotion, as he said, "Arabella, this is kind—kind indeed, if you knew what I have suffered." He paused a moment, and then added, "I will not play the child!—No, in the sight of the living and just God, who will not suffer such things to pass unrequited, in this place, consecrated to His name, I swear to live to be a man, to take a dreadful vengeance on the accursed persecutors of—of—"

"Oh, do not!" said Arabella; "I implore you, do not, in God's holy church, make vows that are forbidden by His laws; else His wrath may fall on you and yours for such an act of daring."

"It has fallen, Arabella," exclaimed Wilford; and he looked upon her with a countenance pale as death, and a wild expression about the eye as he spoke—"it has fallen. My sister, my dear sister, has been put to the torture!"

"Great God!" cried Arabella; "do not say so."

"It is true! it is true!" continued Wilford; "they have maimed, burned, withered her poor hand. And not content with this, when I went to their accursed dwelling, and sought to remove her, that she might have some proper care, they spurned my supplication, and would not allow me to see her."

"Who dared do so?" inquired Arabella.

"Harpsfield! that monster," said Wilford; "that wolf—that devil! I drew my sword upon him. I would have killed him on the spot, when I learned this cruel act, but for his people; they disarmed me, and said I was a madman."

"Thank heaven, they did!" cried Arabella; "and that your hand is saved from blood, though it would have been the blood of the guilty. Leave vengeance to God—to Him who saith it is His own."

"I did worse than that," continued Edward distractedly. "When I found myself disarmed, and that all my reproaches were lost on such a wretch, I—it is madness to think of it—I humbled myself before him; I begged, I sued, I implored for pity—for pity on my sister; but as well might the martyrs, whom these cruel men drag to the stake, beseech the flame not to consume their bodies into ashes, as I might use words that would move the soul of such a wretch. I was at last, I believe, in pity, driven from the house, even by this man's own people, lest he should wreck his vengeance on me too, as he has done on my poor Rose. But, thank heaven! I have devised a means that, I hope, will confound them all."

"Beware how you act," said Arabella; "for you do not know how much they have the power to defend their deeds under the sanction of the Queen."

"May curses fall upon her!" exclaimed Wilford.

"Hush! hush!" said Arabella; "think if any one should but hear you."

"God hears me," cried Wilford; "and He will heed me. I am driven almost to desperation. My father is in a prison; my mother, I fear, is dying in Thornton's house; and poor Rose, still suffering from the agony of the torture, is thrown into a common dungeon into Canterbury Castle, there to perish for want of proper aid."

"She shall not," said Arabella: "my father is the chief officer of this county. I will fall at his feet; I will die there, unless he promise me to release her. I will assist her this moment."

"To implore you to do so," replied Wilford, "was the chief reason for which I now sought this interview. But there is another cause that made it necessary we should meet. To-morrow, Arabella, I leave Canterbury."

"For what purpose?" inquired Arabella eagerly.

"I have, thank heaven," continued Wilford, "met with one honest man. Though he is of the Romish church, yet is he an enemy to such cruel practices. I knew him in Germany; he is but just returned to England, and bears letters from foreign powers to Cardinal Pole; he has promised to take me with him to London, and to afford me the opportunity of stating to the Cardinal the inhuman act that has been practised on my

sister, to plead for my father, and to endeavour to obtain his release, and permission that all our presecuted family may depart these miserable realms. This is my last, my only hope to save them."

"And is there really a ground for such a hope, that you may succeed in saving them?" replied Arabella.

"The generous friend who has undertaken my cause thinks there is a hope—a chance of success," said Edward; "since the moderation of Cardinal Pole is so obvious, that it caused him to be suspected of Lutherism, even at Rome itself."

"May heaven prosper your attempt!" said Arabella: "when did you say that you purpose to depart?"

"To-morrow," answered Wilford; "I would have set off instantly, but I must wait till this friend can leave Canterbury; as it is only by his means I can obtain access to the Cardinal. You will immediately solicit your father in the behalf of my poor sister."

"Alas!" said Arabella; "now I remember me of what I had forgotten in the moment of my alarm for Rose. My father is absent at Dover, and Friar John acts for him now he is away."

"Then Rose is lost!" exclaimed Edward; "lying, as she now does, in a dungeon, without the least aid, and in her dangerous state, death must ensue; for I learned that the inflammation of her arm, in consequence of the torture, was frightfully extended. Is there no way; can nothing be done for her? I will seek Friar John, and force him to set her free!"

"That would be madness," said Arabella. "He would only tell you that Rose suffered by her own obstinacy. I can do more than you could, and I dare do anything to save her!"

"Kind, generous, dearest Arabella!" replied Edward; "how can you accomplish such a purpose?"

"I am daughter to the Sheriff of Kent," said Arabella, "and I know a man in Canterbury, who sometimes comes to my father with the Friar. He has access at all times to the prisoners. If report speaks truth, that man, who is a lawyer, will do anything for money. I will seek him this very day, and, if money can purchase this help, I will buy it. I will visit your poor sister in her prison, bring her thence, if it is possible, or stay there and comfort her. I will dare every peril, and every creature living, in such a cause. I am sure that my father would never countenance such cruelty to Rose Wilford."

"I think he would not," said Edward. "And now, Arabella,

I must bid you farewell; but, ere I depart, remember your promise to me. Heaven knows, we may never meet again; but even in death I could not resign you to such a man as Sir Francis Morgan. I knew him in France; he was the most profligate amongst the profligate—a disgrace to the country to which he owed his birth."

"I loathe his very name," replied Arabella. "In obedience to my father, I have been obliged to receive him at our house; but I will never be his wife whilst I have breath to deny him."

"That is one drop of comfort in the bitter draught of my affliction," said Edward, "and I thank God for it. But are you firm? Can you trust yourself, Arabella?"

"I can trust myself in this," she replied. "Here we stand, Edward, upon the very spot where my mother's honoured remains rest in their bed of dust. In this sacred place, so hallowed by every tender recollection, I solemnly assure you (and her spirit, if it can look down on earth, I would have to bear me witness), that I will never, never, be the wife of Morgan, though I should die by persecution!"

"I believe you," said Edward; "I can leave you with some comfort on that point. For myself, I may never live, Arabella, to claim you; for if I fail in the effort I shall make to save my family by this address to the mercy of Cardinal Pole, I cannot rest under my injuries, and the attempt to redress them may cost me life; and should I even escape the snares of our enemies, I have no prospects but those of an exile!"

"You shall not speak of them now," replied Arabella. "The Cardinal may relent; we will hope he may. God prosper you!"

"And you, Arabella," said Edward; "and may he enlighten your mind, and teach you the fallacy of a faith that seeks to find its support, not in the dictates of truth, but in the blood of the innocent. Farewell, dearest Arabella! I know you will do all you can for Rose. May heaven watch over you and bless you!"

Edward received the farewell of Arabella with considerable emotion. They separated at the church-porch, and Arabella hastened back to Wellminster Hall.

CHAPTER XV

A deadly paleness was on the cheeks of the Lady Arabella when she entered the housekeeper's room, on her return from Wellminster church. She threw herself into a chair, motioned Deborah to close the door, and was for some time speechless. The alarmed housekeeper again sought for drops and water, nor did Arabella refuse either. In some degree recovered from the strong emotions that had overpowered her, she suddenly rose up, threw her arms round Deborah's neck, kissed her, and burst into tears, as she exclaimed, "My dear old nurse, I have no mother, I have not a friend I can trust upon the face of the earth, unless you will be such to me at my need, and never did a poor creature need a friend so much as I do at this moment."

"Alack!" said Deborah, "dear young lady, I am your faithful servant and friend too, as it pleases you to stoop to call me so; and not all the Friar Johns in the world should make me harm a hair of your head. And as to my poor lady, your dear mother, she would have me in her dying hour to be a friend to you in a way I have never dared yet to tell of. So you may trust me, and, God knows, I would die to serve you."

"I believe it, Deborah," replied Arabella; "I will trust you. Make fast the door, and you shall hear all that has passed, not only this morning, but before. You shall know all those previous events which are of consequence sufficient to involve in them the future happiness of my life."

Deborah, who most truly loved her young mistress, now gave her the strongest assurances of fidelity and prudence, and having secured the lock of the door, to prevent interruption, she seated herself by Arabella's side, and lent an attentive ear to her tale. This was soon told, for her young mistress dwelt but slightly upon the interviews she had held with Edward Wilford before Morgan was forced upon her acceptance; and she finished her narrative with a particular account of the inhuman treatment Rose Wilford had experienced from Harpsfield and Thornton, saying that it was in the hope she might procure some aid for his unhappy sister, Edward had

been induced to request that she would grant him the interview which had so lately taken place at Wellminster church.

Deborah listened with an expression of the deepest attention, and seemed to feel a lively interest in every part of her tale. She shook her head, and sighed when she heard of Edward's renewed claim on the hand of Arabella; uttered a few brief exclamations of anger and indignation when she was told of Friar John's interference with Sir Richard to advocate the cause of Morgan; looked dejected when the young lady mentioned the tomb of her mother; but when she heard of Rose's cruel sufferings, and that the poor girl was cast into a dungeon whilst lingering under the effects of a savage torture, the old housekeeper burst into an agony of tears—she even groaned at the recital; and suddenly throwing herself on her knees, she raised her hands and eyes to heaven, as she exclaimed, "O Lord of heaven, have mercy upon thy servants! do Thou arise with Thy rod and Thy scourge to cast out their cruel enemies, for the honour of Thy name, that Thy truth may appear in the sight of all men, and Thy glory be no longer concealed by these wicked followers of Satan!"

Arabella was astonished. "Deborah!" she said, "what is this I hear? for heaven's sake, what do you mean, tell me? Are you mad! Think, if any one should hear you but myself."

"I should, in that case, be known for what I am," replied Deborah; "I should be led to the stake. Well, God's will be done, if that must be the end of it. I am not mad, my dear young lady; and if I have heretofore appeared to be to others what I am not at heart, it was all along for your sake that I dissembled. I did not wish to get myself turned out of doors, in the hope that if I stayed within them, I might one day open your eyes; and that God would make me, as he can do, though but a simple woman, a means to confound the wise. I only stayed till a time should come to give me the occasion, and I have found it now. Your mother, too, on her deathbed, left a solemn charge about you to me, dear young lady."

"Did she?" said Arabella; "I will most gladly hear it, but not now; for I must instantly set off for Canterbury to assist poor Rose: will you go with me, Deborah?"

"I dare not," replied the housekeeper. "If we both go, something will be suspected; it will come to the ears of Friar John; but if I stay behind, I could manage to hide your absence some way or other, as you have of late shut yourself up so much in your own chamber. But how will you get into Canterbury gaol, and without the Friar's knowing it?"

"Leave that to me, Deborah," said Arabella; "I shall take with me a purse well filled with gold, and, if I am not mistaken, that will open the gates of a prison to let me into it, though it might fail to get me out if I were a prisoner. And I know a man in Canterbury who never resists money, let who will offer it. You, Deborah, have knowledge in hurts and in medicines; you must prepare me something to apply to poor Rose's wound, and a drug proper to keep down fever."

"I have a receipt for a burn," answered Deborah, "that was used by your late mother amongst the poor; it will cure the worst burn or scald that was ever known, if applied in time. I always keep it ready prepared, to guard against accidents in the family. Gammer Plaise even has the stuff of me for her patients in the village. And as to medicines, I have the great Doctor Butt's receipt for a fever; and you know that he was chief physician to King Henry the Eighth; so you shall go well-furnished, and may God give a blessing to your pains!"

"I believe—I am sure He will," said Arabella; "for Rose is a most simple-hearted, good girl; and Providence will not, I trust, suffer her to sink under the hard hands of her cruel oppressors. I shall instantly set off."

"But you must not go alone," replied Deborah; "your father left you under my charge, and indeed I would not let you go out to Canterbury for a less cause than this. I would, as it is, leave you behind, and go myself, only I am sure that I should not be able to manage to get into gaol so easily as you will. I must stay here, and somehow or other hinder its being known you are away, else Friar John would ruin me with my old master, though I don't fear Sir Richard a pin's point, if he be left to himself. He might huff me, but I am sure he would not dare to turn me out of my place, for the sake of my long service to his late lady."

"There is not one of the servants that I can venture to trust," said Arabella; "for they are most of them creatures that have been recommended to my father by the Friar. But I know what I will do: you, Deborah, shall lend me your sad-coloured cloak and hood, that will quite disguise me; and so I will set off in your garments for Gammer Plaise's cottage; and blind Tommy, who can find his way to every corner of Canterbury as well as if he had his eyes, shall be my guide and my companion; so you find, Deborah, I shall avoid going there alone in my father's absence."

"Poor blind Tommy is not a fit person to take care of you,

Mistress Arabella," said the housekeeper; "but as it is, I know of no one else who can be trusted; and he is so fond of all Master Wilford's family, and specially of poor Mistress Rose, that he would go to the world's end to serve them."

"But hark!" cried Arabella, "what noise is that in the court-yard? Dear Deborah, do go and see; I am sure somebody is coming into the house, and I do not wish to go to the window; since, if it should be Friar John, I will plead, what is indeed but truth, that I am too ill at ease to meet him."

"I will let you know in a minute," replied Deborah; and she left the room instantly, and soon after returned to inform Arabella that the person arrived really was the Friar, and, as ill-luck would have it, he was going to stay at the Hall till towards the evening. "I am sure it is so," said Deborah; "for I heard him tell the varlet who came with him, that he should be employed in looking out some papers in his closet here till the afternoon, and to take the horses to the stable till then, when he should want them again to go back to Canterbury. So there is no stirring for you till he is gone away."

"How unlucky is this!" exclaimed Arabella; "it must occasion so many hours delay, and when Rose too is in such a state of suffering."

"God help her!" cried Deborah, "but there is no remedy; for, if you attempted to move from the house while the Friar is here, and he should espy you, or find it out, all would be over; he would make use of Sir Richard's name, even to lock you up, for he does what he likes with poor old master."

"It is too true, indeed," said Arabella; "I must be patient. Do you, Deborah, let the Friar know I cannot see him. Give what orders you need in the house, that there may be no suspicion of anything out of the common way; then prepare what is necessary for Rose, and come back to me, and pass away the time with me till I set out, for I have now told you all my cause of unhappiness, and I cannot bear to be alone with my own thoughts, whilst I am held in this state of anxiety and suspense."

Deborah obeyed her young lady; and after dinner was over in the family, and Friar John had shut himself into his own closet—a place held sacred at the hall, and not to be approached without his order—the old housekeeper returned to Arabella. She shut the door with caution.

"There," said Deborah, "is a little parcel that contains all that I can think of for poor Rose. Take care of it. I have done your message to the Friar; he is well content with it,

and is going back again to Canterbury, after he has made an end of rummaging his papers. His man said in the hall, that the Friar came over to hunt out some papers of evidence, I think he called it, against some poor creatures charged with heresy, that have escaped to London. And so he is going to send up the matter of their offences to Bonner. These are terrible times; my heart aches when I think upon them."

"They are terrible, indeed!" replied Arabella; "and, as you say, Deborah, that I must not set out till the Friar has departed, do you employ the intermediate time by telling me what you hinted I was to learn from you respecting my mother. It will be some ease to my mind to know it, and it will take off my thoughts, though but for a while, from a subject that is terrible to my feelings during this state of suspense."

"Friar John is in the house," answered Deborah.

"Yes," said Arabella; "but you told me he was shut into his own closet; and if he is, or is not, he shall not dare to enter my chamber whilst I am in it; so I will lock the door, and then do you speak freely, and never fear any friar, either Spanish or English."

"Well, if you will take upon yourself to lock the door," said Deborah, "I have no right to hinder you, and so then I will speak."

Arabella did lock, and double lock, her chamber-door, and drawing the housekeeper apart to the very end of the room on the opposite side, she bade her sit down and fear nothing, since it was impossible she could be overheard even by a listener.

Deborah began, by asking her young lady if she had the key of her mother's cabinet that stood in the room. Arabella answered, "Yes; but you know, Deborah," she continued, "my spirits have been so weak, that, though my dear mother expressly left the cabinet to me, I have never yet found the heart to examine it entirely, so that I am not acquainted with all its contents."

"But I know something of a part of them," replied the old housekeeper; "and so shall you before we part. Now attend to me, for what I have to say concerns you deeply."

"I am all attention," said Arabella; "take your own time, and tell me all I am to learn."

"I will," answered Deborah. "You must know, then, that your poor mother was, in early life, of the Reformed church, and, as I have heard, was promised in marriage by her parents

to one of their own faith. But before the marriage was accomplished, your mother, who was very beautiful, attracted the eyes of your father, Sir Richard Southwell, and fell in love with him. On learning the truth, her first suitor gave her up to Sir Richard, and so she became his wife. Fondly attached to her husband, and considering him as a man of greater judgment than herself, she listened to his arguments, and, by his persuasion, became a member of the Romish church."

"I have often heard as much," replied Arabella; "and I own to you, Deborah, that I have sometimes suspected my poor mother was not so entirely converted as my father would willingly believe, since she professed great pity for the suffering Reformers, and exerted her influence with my father to do what he could to alleviate their afflictions, whilst her enlarged sense of God's mercy, and the charity of her opinions, often caused her to be reprimanded by Friar John, even in the presence of her husband.

"Your mother loved her husband, and feared the Friar," said Deboran; "but I am sure her heart often reproached her for her desertion of the true faith, For, after my poor lady suspected that I had been worked upon to change my belief, by going so often, as I used to do at one time, to Parson Wilford's, whilst young Master Edward, and you, Mistress Arabella, held company together, when Sir Richard was abroad, my poor lady put home questions to me about the matter; and when I shewed her how it was, and some of the books I used to keep locked up to read at whiles as I could, she shook her head, and bade me be careful how I let it be known abroad for my own sake; for my lady said, says she, 'If Friar John should suspect what you tell me, Deborah, you are a lost woman, and I could not save you.' And I made answer, and said, that I meant to be careful, but if the truth came out, I was ready to burn for it; and on hearing that, my lady sighed, and shook her head, and said that was a reproach to her, and that I had more resolution to do right than she had."

"You have surprised me, indeed!" said Arabella; "but how does this refer to what you told me my poor mother left in charge to you concerning myself?"

"You were absent in London when my poor lady was last taken sick," replied the housekeeper; "and she changed so fast that she thought herself a-dying, and that she should be gone before your return. So, after she had talked to Sir Richard in private, what I have always thought was some-

thing about you and Master Edward, she sent for me;—I shall never forget how she looked when I came in and went to her bedside. She was sitting up, leaning on the pillows for support. Death was in her face; it was all wan and moist, and she laid her hand upon mine, as I sat down upon the bed, and it was as cold and as clammy as a corpse."

Deborah wept, whilst the mention of her mother's last moments drew from Arabella a flood of tears, and the most heartfelt expressions of her regret for such a loss. The old housekeeper continued, as she wiped away the tears that flowed fast down her furrowed cheeks, "There were some flowers lying on the bed-linen, for my lady used to love them, and Sir Richard had brought her a rose or two; and she played with them in her fingers for a minute or so, as if she did not know what she was about; and then, as if some thought crossed her mind, she said to me, 'Deborah,' says she, 'these flowers will soon be withered and dead.' And I answered, 'To be sure, my lady, for they are frail things.' 'Yet,' she added, I shall be dead before they are—they are more lasting than my term of life.' On hearing this, I bid her to be of good heart, and not to think of dying, for fear it should hurt her spirits, but to hope for all things in God. She shook her head, and told me she knew it was so; that she could not last long; and then she talked of you, Mistress Arabella, and feared she should be gone before you could reach her; and though there was not a tear in her eye before, she cried, as fast as I do now, at the thoughts about her child."

"She was speechless when I reached the Hall," said Arabella, weeping. "Oh, I shall never forget how she fixed her dying eyes upon me; how she wrung my hand within her cold grasp, till her own fell motionless in death! It was a sight to melt the hardest heart; I cannot bear to think of it."

"Be composed, dear young lady!" replied Deborah, "she is happy. Let me tell you what she said to me about you before your return. 'Deborah,' continued my lady, 'you have sense and prudence beyond your condition.' I told her she was very good to think so. 'My conscience reproaches me,' she added, 'for the easy compliance I have made, out of love to my husband, in matters of faith; and I fear that I am guilty of a great sin in bringing up my daughter in a church, in the truth of which I never entirely believed; but Arabella is not bigoted, like her poor father' (those were her very words), 'and I am sure,' she said, 'my child would listen to reason.

and examine the truth, if she was put in the right way. Still, I know how dangerous are these times, and how angry her father would be, if she changed. But I am a dying woman, and I must not fear man before God. Do nothing hastily, Deborah, but watch a proper opportunity, and then tell my child my last words, and bid her acquaint herself with a book I have left in the cabinet that I made you remove into her chamber. I hope she will then learn to worship God, and to believe in Him, as you and I do, Deborah, without bigotry or superstition.' "

"What was the book my poor mother so much recommended to my notice?" inquired Arabella.

"It is 'Tindal's Christian Obedience,' " replied the housekeeper, "and there it lies in that cabinet, with many another good book of the like sort; and if Friar John knew such books were there, he would burn them with his own hand, and me too, for telling you about them.—Now, dear young lady, you know all; you know what I am; and if you should betray me, it will cost me my life."

"I will never be so wicked," said Arabella; "no, though I should fail to alter my opinions by the means my poor mother has directed; yet I will not betray you to a cruel death. It was the persecution of these innocent people, that the Friar and my father call heretics, which first made me doubt the truth of a church that could enjoin such savage deeds as acts of duty acceptable to heaven."

"But you will read the books?" said Deborah.

"Yes," replied Arabella, "when my mind is more composed; but now I am too distracted in thought to be capable of understanding them. Do, Deborah, descend into the hall, and see if there is any likelihood of the Friar's departure; for I am impatient to set out to Canterbury, and the evening will soon be drawing on."

The housekeeper obeyed, and returned with the joyful intelligence, that in less than half-an-hour the Friar would be gone. The extreme impatience of Arabella, during this interval, was somewhat diverted from its object, though by the renewal of a subject painful to her feelings, for the housekeeper again returned to the mention of her departed mistress, with that warmth of affection so creditable to her feelings.

"I remember my dear mother well," said Arabella (as Deborah dwelt, with pleasure, upon some particular recollection of her person); "since her death, I have often had her before my eyes."

The housekeeper probably understood this expression in its literal meaning, as she hastily exclaimed, "Have you, indeed! Why, then, I suppose, what people say is true?"

"What is true?" inquired Arabella; "and what is said? I don't understand you, Deborah."

"I thought," replied the old woman, "that you said, but just now, you had often had my poor lady before your eyes since her death!"

"Yes," said Arabella; "but I spoke of the perfect remembrance that I have of her beloved features; I can never forget them; for surely, she looked more like what we fancy in a blessed spirit than a mere mortal. I never saw such a benevolent expression, such sweetness, as shone forth in every line of my dear mother's face."

"Then you have not heard what people say?" continued Mistress Deborah.

"Why, what should they say?" replied Arabella; "surely, no one would be so unjust to cast a word of censure on my poor mother's memory."

"No, no; not that," said the housekeeper: "I am almost afraid to tell you. But people do say that she walks."

"Walks!" exclaimed Arabella, in a tone of surprise.

"Ay; they do say, that her spirit is disturbed by something, and that she may be seen at a particular hour. Truly, I can vouch thus much, that when I was called to her, not long before she died, as I told you just now, she did ask me what it was o'clock. I answered, that it was about five of the clock. And on hearing it, my poor lady cried out, '*Not eight o'clock!* not eight o'clock yet! how long the day seems. I thought it had been near spent. Not eight o'clock yet!' and so she kept on; and truly, as the clock struck eight, the spirit fled the body?"

"I know my dear mother died at that hour; and, as I remember, Deborah, it was on a fine autumn evening, like this."

"It was," replied Deborah; "and, having said so much, I will tell you more. Come to the window. You see that pathway that leads down towards the Park?"

"And which crosses near the summer-house, built by my dear mother's desire, and that we used to call hers," said Arabella. "I know it well, and many a melancholy hour have I spent there since her death.

"Yes," answered Deborah; "and about the hour of eight in the evening, if it is gloomy, people do say, that Lady Southwell has been seen to walk there since her death."

Arabella shook her head: "I do not believe it," she said: "I do not believe, when the spirit is called home to the bosom of its Maker, that God would permit it again to revisit this world of sin and sorrow. You are superstitious, Deborah; although you have taken up a new faith, that denounces all superstition."

"I am not so, I assure you," answered Deborah. "But one evening, when I was very sad, I thought I would go to the old summer-house, where I used so often to attend my poor lady. And as I drew near it, I changed my mind, for the evening was dreary, and I heard the great bell in the clock-house strike eight. I was turning back, when on a sudden I heard such a rustling amongst the leaves, and such a sound! I am sure it was a sigh or a groan, for I was too frightened to tell which; and I turned my head, and then only think what I saw!"

"Not my mother!" exclaimed Arabella eagerly, who was now infected with old Deborah's fears. "Good heaven!—Speak!—What was it?"

"I certainly saw something," replied the housekeeper; "and wrapped, too, in a large cloak; and it glided away, and was gone as I looked round."

"Did you not speak?" inquired Arabella. "It might have been some one from the village. You should have spoken."

"Who, I?" cried Deborah. "God forbid that I, sinner as I am, should speak to a spirit! I ran away as fast as my old legs could carry me; and I thought I should have dropped before I got to the house."

"When was this?" inquired Arabella.

"I fear to tell you," replied the housekeeper. "But, indeed, it was only last night."

"It might have been one of the servants, who wished to frighten you," said Arabella. "For my own part, my dear mother loved me too well to injure me either living or dead. I think that I should not fear to see her."

"Do not say so. It is presumptuous," cried the old housekeeper. "But I hear the hall-door close;—and look! yonder goes Friar John. He turns his horse's head for the road to Canterbury. Now hasten—get yourself ready. Give the Friar a quarter of an hour, in order to be sure that he is off, and then do you set out for the cottage of Gammer Plaise. Tommy will be your guide, and God will bless the good act you go to do for poor Rose."

"If my father should hear of my visit to the prison before

he learns it from me, I will take care that you, Deborah, shall not suffer for letting me go out in his absence. I shall not, I fear, return till late, having been so long delayed by the visit of the Friar to the Hall. But do not be alarmed; the man that I shall bribe to get me into Canterbury Castle, shall find some one to guard me home, unless he will do it himself. I know I can buy his silence; and he fears my father too much to neglect my safety. You will take care to let me in, as you agreed, by the little private door that leads into your apartments."

"Yes, yes, I shall be on the watch," replied Deborah. "I shall have no peace till I see you return. I must go down and let you out by that door now. All the servants are in the common hall; for they are making merry to-day, as I gave them leave in my master's absence. In my sad-coloured cloak and hood, I am sure they will not know you, if they should see you from the windows. And as to master, if he finds it out afterwards, I don't much care; for he knows my value too well to turn me away, and that, too, for letting you do a charitable action to poor Rose Wilford."

It may seem surprising that Deborah should have been so easy about transgressing the orders she had received respecting the security of Arabella; but the truth was, she little feared her master. Sir Richard Southwell was kind and indulgent to his servants; as such, though greatly beloved, he was not feared by any of them; so that they did not scruple to take many liberties, and often even to contradict his orders, secure of escaping, in case of detection, on the easy terms of a slight reprimand.

Arabella put on the cloak and hood, secured the little parcel for Rose, and, bidding adieu to Deborah, stole out of the house in the manner already concerted, and set forward on her way to the village of Wellminster.

CHAPTER XVI.

It now was nearly the end of autumn, and though the weather was fine when Arabella commenced her walk, yet the mists of the approaching evening were already gathering around, and the melancholy cadence of the wind, as it rustled through the branches of the trees, now partially dismantled of their foliage, and the rustling of the leaves beneath her feet, often made Arabella start with nervous apprehension, as she sometimes fancied she heard other footsteps than her own in the woods, or in pursuit of her. In spite of her better judgment, the conversation she had so lately held with Deborah dwelt upon her mind; she could not dismiss it; and by one of those unaccountable, and yet contradictory moods of feeling, that sometimes influence our actions, whilst they are condemned by our reason, she felt a strange desire, as she approached the little pathway that led to the summer-house, to turn down it, and to leave the park in that direction towards the village. But remembering that, should she do so, her walk would necessarily become lengthened, and speed was now her object, she checked this strange desire, and continued to advance on the road that lay before her.

She had scarcely walked forward a few paces, when she distinctly heard a rustling amongst the trees that were near the skirts of the pathway she was pursuing. Her blood chilled in her veins when she remembered the words of Deborah, and she uttered an involuntary shriek, as a figure, wrapped in a mantle, with the head and face so completely shaded as to be concealed from observation, issued from the wood, and standing before her in the very centre of the track, rendered it impossible that she should pass on. Arabella stopped, terror closed her lips, she could not utter another sound; but the figure, in a voice perfectly human, though not at all harmonious, spoke the following words: "Don't be chicken-hearted, but stop five minutes, and hear what I have got to say."

Arabella's fears found instant relief by the dissipation of a superstitious dread that, in despite of common sense, had stolen upon her; yet still unable to speak, she stood trembling and almost breathless, as the muffled man, for a man it was,

thus continued:—"You are the daughter of Sir Richard Southwell?"

"Yes, yes;" Arabella replied in a tremulous voice, and scarcely knowing what she said, added, "I beseech you to let me pass on."

"You will not be for passing on so quickly, when you hear what I have to tell you," said the man; "the scent lies another way."

"I—I don't understand you," answered Arabella; "I—I am going back to the house."

"Then you are going in a strange road for it," continued the intruder; "but don't fear me, as I said before; I know what game you are about to put up; you are off to Canterbury, after Rose Wilford. I tell you so, to let you see that I am in the secret."

Arabella was perfectly astonished, and stood silent, not daring to answer, lest she should betray herself.

"Tell me one thing," continued her tormentor, "would you save Edward Wilford?"

"Edward Wilford!" exclaimed Arabella; "he is in no danger, I trust."

"Is he not?" said the man in an ironical tone; "he will be glad, I fancy, if you can make that appear to-morrow morning."

"What do you mean?" cried Arabella; "speak plainly, I beseech you."

"All I want to know," said the man, "is, do you wish to do him a good turn?—in short, would you wish to keep his head on his shoulders?"

"Gracious heaven!" again exclaimed Arabella; "speak plainly; how can I comprehend these dark words, and spoken in so strange a manner, and by one to whom I am a perfect stranger?—tell me more, or I cannot credit your assertions."

"If you want to know more," said the man,—"to know all, be so good as to walk down the pathway into yonder summer-house, there a person is now waiting on purpose to tell you the matter."

"Comes that person from Edward Wilford?" inquired Arabella.

"No matter for that," replied the man; "you may do as you like, go or stay, that's not my business: all that I have to say is this, that if you do not go, you will hear soon enough that Edward Wilford is a dead man—his crowing will be stopped, I promise you—that's all, and so I wish you a good evening." And without staying to hear Arabella's answer, the

muffled informer struck down an opposite path, left Arabella free to act as she pleased, and in a few minutes was lost to her sight amidst the intricacy of the wood.

The extraordinary language of the man convinced Arabella that he was no gentleman; and yet, as he had left her so perfectly at liberty to choose her own course, after this singular information, she did not think he could be a ruffian that designed her any ill. She had no fears of a personal nature; and the thought flashed across her mind, that Harpsfield, in revenge for Edward Wilford's conduct on hearing of the inhuman treatment that wretch had shewn to his sister, might meditate some plan of destruction for the brother. Perhaps some friend of Edward's was now waiting to disclose to her the design. This conjecture was highly improbable; but Arabella was too much distressed to think clearly; and, without pausing another moment, she rushed on towards the summer-house in the Park. She reached it, the door was half open, yet no one could be seen. She entered, and a person standing near, but behind the door, instantly closed it with violence, and secured it by the bolt. Arabella looked up and beheld—Sir Francis Morgan.

He attempted to lead her to a seat. "I am betrayed!" exclaimed the affrighted Arabella. "This is an artifice. Unbar the door; let me out, Sir! this moment let me pass; I insist upon it; you have no right to detain me; my father shall know of this conduct. Unbar the door!"

For some time Sir Francis Morgan allowed her to vent her feelings of indignation at his conduct: he then said calmly, "I have no intention to detain you, Lady Arabella; I wish to speak with you for a few minutes; and you shall then leave me, if such should be your pleasure, for ever."

"If it was your purpose, Sir Francis, only to tell me that," replied Arabella, "you might have done so without entrapping me to hear it, since you must know how agreeable the intelligence would be to me."

"I should have told you so at the Hall," said Morgan, "but during Sir Richard's absence I am denied all access; and it has become absolutely necessary that what I have to communicate should be made known to you this evening."

"Be brief, Sir, I beg," replied Arabella, "for the sooner we part the better."

"And I am entirely of that opinion," said Morgan; "I think we perfectly understood each other at our last meeting."

"Perfectly," replied Arabella; "I have nothing more to say on that subject."

"You are determined, then," continued Sir Francis, "that when it comes to the point, you will never give yourself to me as my wife."

"Never!" said Arabella in a firm voice.

"And you do not deny, what I have at length learned, even from Friar John, to be true, that your affections are Edward Wilford's; and that you consider your contract to him still binding, though it has been annulled by the Legate."

"You gained a confirmation of the truth from me by artifice," replied Arabella; "but I will not retract my words, nor utter falsehood; and if you knew this already, it needed not that I should repeat it now."

"There you are mistaken," said Morgan, "since it is on account of that very affection, which you acknowledge you feel for Edward Wilford, that I am now about to save his life, out of pure kindness to you."

"This is inexplicable," said Arabella; "I cannot credit any professions of a generous conduct on your part after all that has passed, unless you give me the most undeniable proofs of your sincerity."

"I came prepared to do so," replied Sir Francis; "my only fear was, that I should not obtain an interview with you before it was too late for me to act in his behalf. You freely avow that the life of Edward Wilford is dear to you, and that you would gladly become the means of assisting me in its preservation."

"That point is already answered," said Arabella in a low voice, and somewhat hesitating as she spoke; "be pleased to proceed to your communication, since I must insist upon your detaining me here as short a time as possible."

"Undoubtedly," answered Sir Francis; "and be assured, that, though I might feel sorry for the fate that is impending over the head of so near a relative as Edward Wilford, nothing but my unbounded love for you, my desire to save you the agony of hearing of his death, could have caused me to do what I am now about to do—to offer to save him. I solemnly assure you, and I shall produce the proofs, that all depends upon yourself. One word of yours may save him."

"Of mine!" exclaimed Arabella: "Good heaven! can this be true? Speak in plain terms, I beseech you. Is it really true?"

"I swear to you," said Morgan, "upon this sacred emblem of our faith" (and he drew a cross from his bosom as he spoke)—"I solemnly swear, that what I utter is as true as

that faith which this token enjoins. You have the power to save, or to destroy, Edward Wilford."

"I destroy him!" cried Arabella, with considerable warmth —for her strong sense of feeling was seldom repressed by motives of prudence;—"I would more willingly destroy myself."

"I judged it was so," said Morgan; "and therefore I felt confident, that though the means by which I have obtained this interview might seem offensive, yet you would pardon them when you knew the cause. Here are proofs that must convince you;" and he drew forth a few papers. "Be pleased, Lady Arabella, to read that statement—it is legally drawn up; and then you shall peruse this letter, which is but one evidence out of many in my possession as to its truth."

Arabella took the statement (which was brief), and hastily read it. In doing so, she became greatly agitated, and her hands trembled so much with emotion that she could scarcely conclude the task. On finishing the perusal, she exclaimed, "Gracious heaven! can this be true? Can Edward Wilford thus—unwarily, I am sure it must be—have exposed his life? Could he hold intercourse with a traitor? I—I cannot believe it."

"You have yet only read the statement," said Morgan; "be pleased to glance your eye upon the letter, that is in his own hand; and it is but one out of many addressed by Edward Wilford to Sir Thomas Wyatt, lately executed for high-treason."

Arabella read the letter, dropped it on the ground in her extreme agitation, and could only say, in a voice scarcely articulate, "Have you all these letters?"

"I have," replied Morgan.

"Then, destroy them!" cried Arabella. "Do that, and you will save Edward—you will be generous, indeed."

"And you will thank me," said Sir Francis, "for thus becoming a party concerned in sheltering a traitor to my Queen; by never seeing me more; by casting me off, and by wedding with that traitor; the heretic, the detested rival, who has ruined my hopes of happiness before my face! I love you too well, Lady Arabella, to be capable of such an heroic sacrifice, for which I should most deservedly rank the first amongst fools."

"You will not destroy the letters, then?" replied Arabella: "you said, but now, that it required but a word of mine to save Edward from this danger, and I have spoken that word.

I speak it again; destroy them, and save a brave man from a cruel death. I am sure Edward was no traitor to his country; for, you see, even in that letter, he talks only of taking up arms to guard the life of the Princess Elizabeth."

"He does so," said Morgan; "and talks, likewise, of spending the last drop of his blood in her defence, and in support of her right; gives the name of *murder* to the sentence by which the Lady Jane met her death; calls Mary of England bloodthirsty; Bonner a savage; and the Church of Rome the Antichrist of the Prophet. Doubtless, these things will not be considered at all treasonable in one of her Grace's courts, or with the members of the Star Chamber."

"Cold, unfeeling man," said Arabella, "how can you speak thus tauntingly of what must affect your kinsman's life? Once more, I beseech you to destroy the papers; or, if you fear to do it, give them all to me—I will destroy them, and take upon myself whatever consequences may follow: I will begin with this letter;" and, as she spoke, she stooped to pick it up; Morgan interrupted her purpose, and secured it.

"I have not said, that I will *not* destroy them," he replied; "but I must annex one condition to the act, if I give my consent for their destruction."

"Speak it," cried Arabella, "and if all that I possess on earth, either now, or in time to come, must be the price;—if that can satisfy you, I will not hesitate a moment to comply with your demand."

"My demand is not so low and grovelling as you would imply, lady," said Sir Francis haughtily. "I am not to be bought by a price; or rather, let me say, I am only to be bought by what is beyond all price—by yourself. Give me yourself, Arabella; and though, by protecting Wilford, I should lay my own head in danger of the axe, I will save him."

"Base-minded, selfish man," replied Arabella; "could you be so mean to urge me to give you my hand, now that you have discovered the truth, that my affections are given to another? Would you have me despise you for making use of that very knowledge, to act upon my feelings, to preserve the man I love, in order to give myself to one I hold in contempt —whom I could hate, but that hatred is a sin?"

"You will not consent to the terms, then?" said Morgan.

"Never!" she exclaimed, with great vehemence. "I would rather see Edward Wilford dead!"

"Then you shall be gratified," cried Morgan. "This night

the warrant, already prepared for his detention, shall be put in execution; and to-morrow he will be conveyed to London. The Tower and the block both follow: for, who can ever, in our days, fancy the one separated from the other? I will now open the door of the pleasure-house. I promised not to detain you." He advanced towards it as he spoke, still watching the countenance of Arabella, to take advantage of the least hesitation that might appear in her.

"Do not go," she said: "You shall not go. Morgan, be generous. Do an act but of common humanity, and I will be bound to you in gratitude for ever."

"I love you," said Morgan, endeavouring to cloak his shameless cruelty under an appearance of passionate affection —"I love you to madness; and rather than see you live to be the wife of Wilford, I would cast down my own life as freely as I would his. I cannot save the man who would afterwards be yours."

"If that is the objection," replied Arabella, "I will promise —nay, I will swear, if there is no other way to save him, that I never will be his! You can preserve his life—you must do it—you cannot be so cruel."

"I *could* save him," said Morgan," for I hold the evidence that must convict him; and I could also, as well as my follower, Samuel Collins, become an evidence against him; for we were both acquainted with some of his transactions with Sir Thomas Wyatt; and even our own safety demands that we should not connive at them, more especially as the law is now up in arms to detect every man but suspected of treason, since the dangerous attempt made by Stafford to renew rebellion in this kingdom."

"Stafford was an exile," observed Arabella, "and landed on our coasts supported by a foreign power."

"And on that very account Wilford would be held the more dangerous; for he, too, has been an exile, and in a country adverse to our government at home."

"You will save Edward, then," continued Arabella, "if I solemnly promise never to become his?"

"No!" exclaimed Morgan. "I should, in that case, have but the miserable satisfaction of knowing that you were not his. But I have bolder hopes—a higher aim. I love you, Arabella. Your father has sanctioned our union. I will have no half-measures. Give me yourself, or this hour we part for ever. The choice is yours. Will you be mine?"

"Never! never!" said Arabella.

"Then let the law take its course," replied Sir Francis. "Your father shall know of this treatment."

"My father would despise you," cried Arabella: "for, blinded as he is by his unhappy prejudices, and the influence of Friar John, still he would never sanction your conduct to me this day. Did he know the terms upon which you won my consent, he would reject you for being capable of using them."

"But you would not dare to reveal to him the transaction of this evening," said Sir Francis, with a cool effrontery of manner that greatly incensed Arabella.

"What!" she exclaimed in a tone of indignation, "I would not dare to tell him—I would not? The first words that pass my lips when I once more meet my father shall be to tell him what you have dared to do—have dared to propose. My father shall know you for what you are—a villain!"

"Tell him so by all means," said Sir Francis; "and see if even my consent to save Edward would avail. Sir Richard Southwell conceals nothing from his spiritual director, Friar John; and where a matter of treason against the Queen was in question, he would not be scrupulous in revealing it. Judge then, how long it would be ere that zealous Romish priest delayed to communicate the tale of Edward Wilford's conduct to the Queen and council."

Arabella was struck by these words; she was silent, for she could not deny their truth.

"I believe you will now admit," continued Sir Francis, "that when I said you would not dare to repeat to your father the subject of our interview this evening, I did but speak what was sooth."

"Cruel, cold-hearted man!" said Arabella, and she burst into tears; "you have laid a toil for me at every turn, so that I may not escape the nets you have spread for my destruction."

"You will leave me?" replied Morgan; "you will pronounce the doom of Edward as irrevocable?"

"Heavens!" exclaimed Arabella, "would you force me to become perjured?"

"I force you to do nothing," said Morgan calmly; "I leave you to your own free will; but ere you determine, I thought it but right you should clearly understand the terms upon which we part."

Arabella, whose first ebullition of justly provoked feeling had subsided, seemed now overwhelmed with sorrows at the

thoughts of Edward's danger, and at the dreadful alternative which lay before her, till a deep sense of horror, excited by the shameless cruelty of Morgan (so perfectly in character with the times in which he lived), appeared at once to possess her, and rushing towards the entry, she exclaimed, as she laid her hand upon the lock, and shook it violently, in her effort to burst open the door, "I will appeal to my father—I will tell him all, and trust to his feelings as a father, as a man, that I may not be thus sacrificed."

"You forget," said Sir Francis, as he gently removed her hand from the lock, and contrived to place himself so as to stand between Arabella and the door; "you forget, in your distraction, that I told you, before to-morrow morning, Edward Wilford would be a prisoner. Your father is absent at Dover; I bid you farewell."

"I am distracted indeed," cried Arabella; "you have worked my mind to frenzy; but you shall not pass out to execute your cruel purpose. O Morgan, I will sue even to you, I will kneel at your feet, and beg you, in mercy to yourself, as you one day hope to find mercy at your need, that you will shew it to your unhappy kinsman. Think what are his sorrows; his father is lingering in a prison—his mother lies on the bed of death—his innocent sister is cast into a dungeon, whilst the agonies of a savage torture are yet upon her."

"And to-morrow morning," added Morgan artfully, "Edward was to have set off for London, in company with some powerful friend, to plead to the Cardinal to obtain mercy for his afflicted family, to save them all. Who then is his enemy?—Arabella. Who will prevent him from saving his father?—Arabella. Who but Arabella consigns the mother, the sister, yea himself, to death?—who but she, when but a word might rescue him?—who does this?"

Arabella wrung her hands with agony, as the tears ran down her cheeks, and convulsive sobs burst from her bosom. Morgan saw the effect he had produced upon her feelings, and thus continued:—"Edward might save them all, should he have access to the Cardinal. It is most likely he would do so; for Pole is so adverse to the sanguinary system of these times, that he would rejoice, when personally solicited, to interfere to do an act of mercy. It is to be expected, therefore, that Edward might save his family from ruin. But if he too is arrested, accused of treason, and cast into a prison, he can do nothing; he lies there by Arabella's will. Then will it be

Arabella who leads the old man to the stake, who renders the last hours of his life bitter to him. It will be Arabella who destroys the miserable Alice; who leaves Rose to perish in a dungeon, or to the mercy of a wretch, who has already withered her hand, and who will ultimately wither her whole body in the fiery sacrifice of faith. It will be Arabella alone who drags Edward Wilford to the block, and there leaves his corpse a headless trunk!"

"Hold, hold!" cried Arabella, "you will drive me mad. Hear me, Morgan, and heed me. If my words or my actions are as reckless as your own, remember, you are yourself the cause of both. You have played upon my feelings, you have goaded me to frenzy. What conduct would you expect from me, should I consent to be your wife?"

"What conduct?" said Morgan—"what I should deserve; for I cannot think the perfect love, the devoted affection that I feel for you, could be returned by a mind so generous as yours, in other than in kind acknowledgments. I will await the event of time, and the efforts of my own sincere devotion to your happiness, to win an interest in your heart."

"You will never find it," replied Arabella: "Look upon me, Morgan; we both stand in the presence of God, who reads the secrets of all hearts; and He knows full well that you can never find a place in mine. Your cruel and unmanly treatment of me this hour, in making me arbiter either to destroy the innocent friends so dear to me, or myself, is an act that must render you for ever hateful in my eyes. And the meanness of spirit which you betray, in shewing you could accept the hand of any woman, were she the greatest that ever walked the earth, on terms like these, must make me hold you in contempt. Would you then, knowing that such must be the feelings with which I should ever view you—would you take me on such terms as these?"

"I will take you on any terms," replied the mean and wretched man; "I would trust to time, to my own conduct, to hope, for a change of feeling in one I so adore. Do you consent?"

"Can no other conditions move you?" inquired Arabella.

"None, so help me heaven!" answered Morgan in a determined tone. "If you refuse, Edward dies."

Arabella stood like a statue, her countenance blank with horror, as she said, in a voice deep and emphatic, from the intense agony of her feelings, "Give me the papers, and whilst I destroy them, hear me vow the sacrifice of—of myself!"

"No," said Morgan; "when you *are* mine, I will destroy them; but till then they rest with me as my security. Pardon me, I cannot place my happiness in the power even of your faith; for though I do not doubt it, there may be others that might induce you to revoke your promise."

"Infamous man!" exclaimed Arabella, "then I see this is but a shallow artifice to deceive me; you would gain me, and still retain within your own hands the means to destroy your kinsman. I will not trust you."

"Hear me!" cried Morgan.

"I will not hear you!" continued Arabella vehemently; "I will proclaim your infamy to my father, to the whole world, whatever be the consequence. And I do not hesitate to tell you that I have a suspicion your hatred to Edward Wilford is founded on something more than the jealousy of a rival, or a zeal for the Queen's cause:—it is the love of gold; it is for gold you would sell your kinsman's blood, and then step into his place."

"I beseech you to hear me," said Sir Francis.

But Arabella heeded not the interruption, and thus spoke on: "You are the next heir were Edward Wilford no more, to old Sir John Mordaunt's lands. Take heed, I beseech you, how you tamper with your own soul. The innocent blood that is spilt to render worldly profit to you, shall call upon you for the payment of an awful debt hereafter—the forfeit of eternity."

"I will meet the demand, and never fear it," said Morgan with the utmost effrontery. "I conjure you to hear me but one word; consent to be mine, and the hour that makes you such shall consign those writings to destruction; and I will swear never to injure so much as a wandering hair upon the head of Edward Wilford, though he is my greatest enemy."

"Your oath would be worthless," cried Arabella; "it would be as easily wafted away by the first gust of angry passion, as these withered autumn leaves are scattered by the rude breath of heaven."

"Nay, I will trebly swear," said Sir Francis, "by all that is feared now or hoped hereafter, I will swear to—"

"I would not rely upon an oath of yours," said Arabella—"no, not for the security of the meanest thing on earth, far less for the life of the man you profess to hate. Had you really wished to save him, even by your own base means, you would have destroyed those papers when, appalled by fear, I offered to sacrifice myself as the price of their destruction.

But do not talk of oaths at a moment when you would have called on God to witness a compact that he must have held accursed; a mockery of the holiest vows; an abuse of the dearest bond of social life. Unbar the door and give me passage, or I will appeal to the laws of my country to redress this insult."

"You will not consent then," said Morgan; "you refuse my terms; you pronounce the doom of Wilford?"

"I pronounce your doom," replied Arabella, "by the witness of God's word, I pronounce it! The man of blood shall be requited with blood. If you pursue your design to take away the life of your unoffending kinsman, you are lost for ever—you are a murderer!"

Morgan's countenance became flushed with the ungovernable violence of his passions, as Arabella thus forcibly and justly accused him: he fixed his eye upon her for a moment, and said in a stern and menacing manner, "You will give him up to my power, then?"

"You have no power over him," replied Arabella, "I will trust to God for his security."

"Do it," said Morgan sternly, "and see if He will save him. You will not consent to my terms to save the blood that must be spilt?"

"Never!" exclaimed Arabella; "I will dare the consequence. To consent to any terms with such a mind as yours, hardened in hypocrisy, and reckless in guilt, would be vain. I should be sacrificed, and those I would preserve be nothing spared. I can read all your falsehood: your very looks condemn you; you dared not look me in the face whilst you proposed your villany."

"But I dare execute it," said Morgan, "if it be villany. To-morrow morning shall convince you of that; to-morrow I will be satisfied, and Wilford dies."

Sir Francis Morgan instantly unbarred the door, rushed from the summer-house, whilst Arabella stood gazing after him, her whole frame still agitated by the violence of those contending and irritating feelings that had been called up during the late scene.

For some time she seemed scarcely conscious where she was, or of her own purpose, but remained fixed and motionless on the very spot where Morgan had burst from her. At length a sudden recollection appeared to rush upon her mind, and she exclaimed, "Yes, I may yet save him; I will instantly seek Edward Wilford; I will tell him all; he may this night

fly from Canterbury; he may escape the toils this wretch has spread for his destruction: some spirit of a higher world than this has surely suggested the thought—I will obey the suggestion. God calls me to his deliverance—I will dare all to accomplish it."

Without pausing another moment for farther deliberation, Arabella instantly quitted the summer-house, passed the Park with surprising rapidity, gained the village, and rushed into the cottage of old Gammer Plaise. The surprise that it produced must be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

As Arabella burst into the cottage, in a manner so different to that with which she had hitherto visited the dwellings of the poor, an old man, who stood talking to Blind Tommy in a tone of condolence, for the lad was weeping bitterly, exclaimed, "The Lord help us! why, what mad quean have we here?"

"I am mad, indeed!" said Arabella; and then, as if recollecting herself, she added with more composure, "I have been greatly alarmed in the Park."

"The Lord bless you! is it you?" cried the old man: "Good lack, my Lady Arabella; I didn't know you, when you came in, in such a way as almost to knock me down, as I stood near the door;" and he doffed his cap respectfully as he spoke, and shewed a head covered with a few thin locks of silvery whiteness.

"I am sorry," said Arabella, "that I should have alarmed you, but I have been frightened in my way hither—I—"

"I suppose, then, you met the men in charge of the prisoner," continued the white-headed villager.

"What men?—what prisoner?—have they taken him?" inquired Arabella eagerly, and with almost breathless anxiety.

"They have taken poor old granny," said Tommy.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Arabella, greatly relieved from the apprehension which she had instantly conceived that it must be Edward Wilford who was mentioned as a prisoner.

"That is not kind, to thank heaven that granny is taken away; and for you, too, my lady, to say so, when poor granny used to be so fond of you," said Tommy, in a peevish tone, as he sobbed his reproaches to Arabella.

"You mistake me, poor child," she replied: "I am not so wicked to thank heaven that your grandmother should be in trouble; I came to speak with her."

"But you'll never speak with her here again, lady, I fear," said the boy; "those wicked men have taken her away for a heretic and a witch, and I am sure I can't tell what they mean; for granny used to read the Bible, and say her prayers, and cure the sick folks, and the cows too, and that's all the harm that ever she did in her life; as Gaffer Turf there knows well enough, if he will speak the truth, like an honest man."

Arabella wished to get rid of the old man, but she did not know how to do it to avoid exciting suspicion.

"Ay, ay," said old Turf, the sexton of Wellminster; "I believe Gammer Plaise was a good woman, for all that's come and gone yet; thof some folks would have it that she had an evil eye; thof, for my part, I always said, says I, she has no more an evil eye than her betters. But she is old, and her eye, like everybody else's, will blink with old age, if they live to make old bones; and the bell don't toll for them, as it often does for many a younger one; for a fresh cheek and a bright eye as often come to the ground, as those that are withered by age,—but these are miserable times."

"They are miserable, indeed," said Arabella: "and what, my poor boy, will become of you? why are you left behind?"

"They would not let me go with granny," answered Tommy, "though I wanted to go to comfort her; and they said, though I was blind, and couldn't see the devil when granny raised him, yet I might be one of his imps, and help her to bring him up, for all that; and so I was left behind."

"And what will you do, my poor child?" repeated Arabella.

"What will I do?" cried Tommy; "why, lady, I will do as the poor birds did, when the wicked boys in the village wrung the old one's neck,—I will droop and die; for I am blind, and I have not a friend on earth."

"But you have a friend in heaven; my dear child," said Arabella, "and He has promised never to desert the orphan: and I hope you have a friend on earth too; I will be such to you."

"No, no," said Tommy, "don't mind me; but if you can, do be granny's friend, for I am afraid the wicked men will burn her."

"Burn her!" cried old Gaffer Turf; "it would be a shameful thing if they did: but to see now these times, they ruin every honest man; they burn so many, it is a great hurt to trade. By and by, I suppose, they will be for burning everybody, and so leave nobody to be buried at all. I might as well use my spade to dig in a marl-pit, for what it is good for in my hands; we have scarce a corpse comes to ground, they carry so many to the stake. And even when they are buried they will not let folks rest in their graves, but dig them up and burn them too, as they did Peter Martyr's wife at Oxford.* A woodcutter and a fagot-binder is a craft worth ten of a sexton's calling, now-a-days—these are miserable times."

* At Oxford, the bones of Peter Martyr's wife were dug up by order of the Legate Cardinal Pole, and buried in a dunghill.

"They are indeed, and fraught with wretchedness," said Arabella. I remember you now, friend,—you are Gaffer Turf, the old sexton. I—I think you allowed Master Edward Wilford to have the key of the church this morning; did you not?"

The old man put his finger to his nose, as he said in a low voice, "Not a word of that; I love Master Edward and all his family well enough; but, you know," and he winked his eye significantly, "I didn't let him have the key neither, thof I let Tommy have it, because, thof he is blind, he loves to be running his fingers over the organ, when he can get anybody to blow the bellows; so, you see, all was right,—I only lent the key to Tommy."

"But you knew who I wanted it for, I am sure, Gaffer," said Tommy; "for Master Edward didn't give you a silver sixpence for letting me play the organ this morning."

"Hold your tongue, you young rogue," cried old Turf; "I let you have the key, and so I told the gentleman who was spying hereabouts to-day. I told him it was for you to go into the church to play to the Lady Arabella.

"To me?" exclaimed Arabella. "Why did you mention me?"

"Because the gentleman rated me for letting strangers have the key of Friar John's new church. And he said he was sure it was for Master Wilford, for that he saw him go down the green lane and steal into the church, and so he came to me to ask about it,—he was sure it was Master Wilford. 'That's what you can't be sure of,' says I to him, 'for it was my Lady Arabella that went just now into the church.' 'Did she so?' says he, 'and is the door open now?' 'I believe it is,' says I, 'for, now I think of it, the lock is broke off the little door behind the rood-loft; and so, if folks will be getting in to look at the fine new rood that has been set up, I can't help it.' And so the gentleman said no more, but off he goes too, and I do think he got into the church at the door behind the screen, under the rood-loft, for afterwards I saw him standing near it on the outside by the church. And so I went up to him, and I said I hoped there was no harm done to nobody, and he said no, but told me to get the lock of the little door mended, and not to let people be going into the church again, for the Friar would not like it."

"And what gentleman was it who made these inquiries?" said Arabella.

"Nay, I don't know," answered old Turf; "only it was a gentleman that rides by here sometimes along with the Friar and another the like, to Wellminster Hall."

"There, my friend," said Arabella to the aged sexton,—"there is something for you, and now leave me to talk to this poor boy; I will see that he is taken care of. You had better not remain here after what has so lately chanced to his poor grandmother."

"Why, that's true, lady," said old Turf; "and I thank you for your largess. And if there's anything I can do for you, Mistress Arabella, in my way, I'll do it with all my heart, to oblige you."

"I thank you, friend," replied Arabella; "but your business lies with the dead, and I am living, so I shall not trouble you."

"No trouble at all, my lady, I do assure you," said old Turf, as he made a respectful bow, and once more uncovered his white locks,—"no trouble at all; and so I give you a good evening;" and away went Gaffer Turf.

As soon as he was gone, Arabella asked Tommy, how it came to pass that he had not told her, or Master Edward, that the door behind the screen, near the rood-loft, was open in the morning when they met in the church.

"I am sure I did not know it," said Tommy; "and Gaffer Turf is getting very old now; but, if he liked, he might have held his tongue about it to the strange gentleman; but I dare say, though he did not tell us so, that the gentleman gave him a silver sixpence to let him steal into the church when you were there, that he might hear what was said; for old Turf loves money, and he was too deep for everybody in the village, except poor granny; and he would not have told you what he did just now, only for fear it should come to your ears, and so he might be blamed if he did not."

"Then, I can guess all the rest," replied Arabella; "I can account for all that appeared so extraordinary to me this evening. I see we were both betrayed."

"Not by me, I am sure," said Tommy, "for I sat in the church porch all the time you were together, as Master Edward told me to do; and I never heard a foot-fall; so that makes me sure that old Turf must have let the gentleman slip in, by taking him round the other path at the back of the church, for that's the way to the little door behind the rood-loft. But I'll never trust Gaffer Turf again as long as I live; and granny used to say she didn't half like him."

"It is unfortunate, indeed," said Arabella; "and now, Tommy, I must speak to you, for the evening is drawing on apace."

"Don't think of me, dear lady," replied the child, "but do think of granny; if you can do something for her, I shall be so glad."

"Would you like to see her?" said Arabella.

"I can't see her," answered the blind boy; "but I would give all I have in the world, though that is but a new groat, if I could get near her to comfort her in prison; for I am sure she will be taken to prison, and must be half-way there by this time."

"I am going to see poor Rose Wilford," said Arabella; "and perhaps, I may see your granny too."

"Is Mistress Rose in prison?" cried the boy; "I never knew that. And is she taken up for a witch as well as granny?"

"No," replied Arabella; "Rose is accused of heresy."

"Ay," said Tommy, "that's what they call everybody, who says their prayers as old Parson Wilford taught them. I shall go next, I suppose. I don't care if I do; for I'll never deny the Truth, nor King Edward's Catechism, as it was taught me by Master Wilford."*

Arabella, whilst speaking to the boy, had carefully re-adjusted her mantle and hood so as completely to conceal her person; and being now prepared, she asked the lad if he could guide her to the lodgings of Master Edward Wilford, in Canterbury.

"To Master Edward's lodgings?" cried Tommy; "why, I thought you wanted to go to prison, lady, to see granny and Mistress Rose?"

"So I do," replied Arabella; "but I must first see the brother of Mistress Rose; and you must guide me to him, for I am sure you know where he lives in Canterbury."

"Yes, that I do," answered the boy; "he lodges at Widow Littlewit's; and I know the way to the house, as well as if I had eyes."

"Then we must instantly set out," said Arabella; "and if you will but serve me faithfully, I will be your friend as long as I live."

"Be granny's friend, dear young lady," cried Tommy, "and that will do me most good; for I shall break my heart if they hurt granny."

* The Catechism here spoken of by Tommy, was drawn up by Cranmer, and dedicated to that excellent young King Edward the Sixth; hence, it was commonly called King Edward's Catechism. It was generally taught to young persons of the Reformed church.

"We must cross the fields," said Arabella; "for I do not wish to pass down the village, to be seen by all the people."

"Come along then, lady," replied Tommy; "and you do walk so fast that we shall be at Canterbury in less than half-an-hour."

"And here, Tommy," said Arabella, "carry this little parcel for me, and take care of it, since it contains something to do good to poor Mistress Rose; for those wicked men, at Canterbury, have burnt her in the hand."

"Have they been so cruel?" said Tommy; "how could they find the heart to hurt poor dear Mistress Rose? I wonder the sight of their own cruel deed did not strike them as blind as I am.

"They are wicked, indeed, Tommy," said Arabella; "but we must not now talk of them, for we are about turning into the high-road; so the less we speak the better, for I have drawn my cloak about my head so as not to be known; and remember, Tommy, upon no account to call me by my name, as we pass along the streets of Canterbury; but guide me as directly as you can to the lodgings of Widow Littlewit. I shall stay but a few minutes to speak to Master Edward, and then I must seek a person who, I hope, will gain me admission to the prison."

After this conversation, Arabella and her blind guide continued their route in profound silence; and entering Canterbury by the Westgate, they soon found themselves amidst the bustle of a large and populous city. As Arabella and the boy turned down one of the streets, in order to proceed to the habitation of Mother Littlewit, a mingled confusion of sounds struck upon their ears, and she perceived that some public disturbance was likely to impede their progress.

Several men, women, and boys, were engaged in one of those popular uproars of an indignant mob, that, even to this day, are sometimes seen in an English city, when a matter that is considered a breach on the freedom of John Bull comes within the scope of present redress. In such cases, the arm of an Englishman will often prove stronger than the arm of the law, and obtain a speedy victory. So was it now, for the uproar in question was solely in consequence of the mob having rescued, from the clutches of Catchpole Miller and the town constable, poor old Gammer Plaise, whilst on her way to prison.

The savage practice of seizing the unhappy members of the Reformed church, and of committing them to durance to take their trials on charges of heresy, was universally held in detes-

tation by the great body of the people; and though kept in awe by the power of Mary and her threatening proclamations, occasions, nevertheless, were not wanting when they shewed their abhorrence of these acts of cruelty, and public commotions often arose at such times. It was found necessary, therefore, to convey a prisoner for examination, or to his confinement, under the escort of a strong guard of bills and glaives. In the present instance, the insignificance of the accused, by some oversight on the part of her enemies, had induced them to believe that Gammer Plaise was too old, too poor, and too humble, to cause the least popular sensation on her removal from Wellminster to the prison of Canterbury Castle. So that a catchpole and a constable, armed by a warrant from Sir John Baker to apprehend and secure her person, were deemed a sufficient force to put their intentions in execution.

But in this they were mistaken. Gammer Plaise was a well-known character, for many miles round: her skill in pharmacy had obtained considerable celebrity; her salves and ointments, for broken shins and cracked crowns after a village wake or fair, were held infallible by all the thick-skulled bumpkin votaries of the arts of fisty-cuff and single-stick. And the good wives of Canterbury, as well as of Wellminster, who (to use a phrase of modern invention) were in the family way, deemed no old woman within twenty miles of the place, so skilful at the hour of their need as Gammer Plaise. And for curing the thrush, colic, and other disorders incidental to children, she was considered unrivalled in the superlative degree amongst all the country gossips. And besides this, whenever any of the above-named good wives had over-fed or crammed their children, in pure kindness, so as nearly to produce suffocation, Gammer Plaise's cardamom drops were held infallible to expel what the gossips called the *vind* from their little overloaded stomachs.

And to all these valuable qualities (though the Gammer really was no witch, and never indeed pretended to be such) it was said she added some skill in fortune-telling; since, some how or other, many a pretty rosy-cheeked damsel had more than once spread before her the open palm of a plump and ruddy hand, to know if John or Roger of the green was like to take that same little hand, and to slip a ring upon one of its fingers, under the roof of the church-porch, where in these days the ceremony of marriage was generally performed. And for expounding those ancient omens of English superstí-

tion, the crossing of a solitary magpie in the path of a traveller, the night-howl of a dog, the long-sheeted flake of a tallow-candle, the tick of a death-watch, and the various significations of all sorts and kinds of dreams (from the fearful vision of the white horse, to that dream of the dead which portends news of the living), Gammer Plaise was not to be surpassed by any sibyl either of modern or ancient times.

These were the popular accomplishments of the poor old woman; but she had others nothing less useful, and really of a very respectable and praiseworthy order. Gammer Plaise was largely endowed with a considerable share of strong common sense, which perhaps, after all, is not quite so common a possession as the term would imply; and, in modern times, there have been persons who have proved themselves great fools in attempting to expound the meaning of a thing, which, though obvious enough in itself, was something beyond their own shallow conceptions. In addition to this natural strength of understanding, the old Gammer's education was very superior for her day; for she could read Tindal's Translation of the Bible, without finding it necessary to spell out any words, except they had more than three syllables; and her memory was so tenacious, that she knew many verses and even whole chapters of this Holy Book by heart. Attentively observing in what manner her good pastor, Owen Wilford, pronounced the hard names in the Bible, she was very particular to catch the sounds; so that every Judaical appellative in her mouth received its due share of high intonation, or emphasis on a particular letter, that often made the double A roll like the R, and the *Noah* of the patriarch to come off from her lips with as true a Hebrew harshness on the last syllable as if it had fallen from the mouth of a Rabbi.

Her devout attention to the discourses of Owen Wilford, and having read with much acuteness a few good books on the Reformation that he had put into her hands, had also rendered her well acquainted with the principles on which it was founded; and, bold and zealous in the cause of Truth, the Gammer openly defied Thornton, the Bishop of London, and the Devil, as she would a triumvirate leagued for the support of cruelty and sin.

This zeal in the cause of the Reformed church had helped to bring on the greatest calamity of her life, as she had encouraged her only son (the father of blind Tommy) to suffer martyrdom at Smithfield, rather than recant, and turn to the church of Rome. From that period, there were times in which

her intellects were said to be disturbed, so that whenever the Pope, or Bonner (who had brought her son to the stake), chanced to be named, she grew so violent in her discourse, that no earthly power had yet been able to stop the vehemence of her accusations against the church of Rome and the persecutions of the Protestants. At all other times, she was as quiet, compassionate, neighbourly, and kind-hearted an old woman as ever gossiped round a winter hearth; for, in happier days, Gammer Plaise, notwithstanding all her good sense, had been as thorough a gossip as one would desire to circulate the news in a country town or village, where everybody knows his neighbour's business quite as well, and sometimes much better than his own.

When Catchpole Miller and the constable had proceeded to take up Gammer Plaise (in consequence of her behaviour to Thornton at the removal of Owen Wilford), she had submitted quietly enough to their power, well knowing that she was too old and too feeble to contend with them; but she remembered that this was the market-day of Canterbury, and she determined in what manner to avail herself of that circumstance, when the proper moment arrived for action.

As soon, therefore, as she found herself in one of the streets near the busy scene of traffic, she observed some stout farmers and their young men, who were about returning home after market,—and seeing that they had just issued forth from the Chequers, a hostelry or inn, famous for its strong ale (ever since the days of Geoffrey Chaucer, where it was quaffed by his pilgrims), she rightly judged that the spirit of the potent beer had, in no small quantity, already mounted and settled in their heads. They talked loud, and exhibited other symptoms of their late conviviality; such as shewing the side-path of the street to be too narrow for the bold figures or lateral movements which they made in the effort to walk straightforward, and roaring out a jovial chorus, with throats as full and voices as strong as a bellman's when he cries lost goods.

Gammer Plaise, on the sight of these well-known friends, no longer kept silence, but hallooing to them in a shrill voice, the cry met their ears, and they instantly faced about, and recollected the village apothecary of so much note. She then asked them, in an imploring tone, if, in God's name, they would suffer a poor old neighbour to be taken to Canterbury gaol and tried for a heretic and a witch, only because she had said her prayers, as all good people did in King Edward's time, and had made herself useful amongst her friends.

The English are a generous people, and as such, more especially when their generosity is enforced by the potent fumes of strong ale, they generally take part with the weaker or oppressed party, even though that party should chance to be in the wrong, as it sometimes happens in such cases. In the present, however, Gammer Plaise was really an innocent sufferer; and her warm appeal to her stout Kentish neighbours, was as warmly and as gallantly answered by them, as any appeal of the like nature might have been, had it been addressed by a young and distressed damsel to a party of knights-errant in the reign of King Edward the Third. They instantly rallied, or rather staggered, round her; oaken cudgels were flourished, fists were clenched, and hearty cuffs dealt smartly round in a minute; and Catchpole Miller and the town constable rolled in the kennel before those astonished officers of the law had even time to offer resistance or defence; whilst the mingled uproar of hootings, shoutings, railings, laughter, and curses, with a shower of mud and stones (the latter bestowed by sundry ragged and idle boys who had volunteered to join the rescue), were sent after the affrighted catchpole and his companion, as soon as they could recover themselves to find the use of their legs, and use them to run off as fast as they could, to gain farther assistance in the execution of their warrant.

It was just at this victorious crisis when Arabella and blind Tommy drew near the scene of action. Tommy, whose faculty of hearing, as if in some measure to recompense his want of seeing, was peculiarly acute, in an instant caught the well-known accents of his granny's tongue; and, leaping and frisking forward with a delight that was perfectly ecstatic, he cried out, "That's granny! I am sure that's granny—they have set her free; hark! they have rolled the catchpoles in the kennel; only do hear the boys!" and away ran Tommy towards the very thickest of the action.

Arabella, who, wholly unacquainted with the place where he had proposed to guide her, felt she could do nothing without her conductor, was now compelled to follow after him, and to make her way as well as she could amongst the mob assembled and assembling from all quarters of the town. Farmers and old wives returning from market, rosy maidens, and apprentices, apple-women, stall-keepers, and the valiant champions, with their oaken cudgels still flourished in their hands, were now all engaged, and all in motion. Some swore that they would hang the catchpole; others, being warmed

in their cups, declared that they would do as much for the Bishop of Dover, the Cardinal, and even the Queen, who permitted such cruelties in her kingdom. Many averred it was high time things should change, or nobody would be safe if somebody did not begin to act, and three cheers were voted and given to the jolly Kentishmen, who had dared to pluck up heart enough to shew a true English spirit—to trounce a catchpole, and save an honest old woman from being burnt as a heretic. Popular feeling spreads like wildfire, and nothing could exceed the general good-will now displayed towards the old Gammer, nothing could go beyond the valour of the tongue, now shewn on all sides.

But popular feeling, like many other spontaneous feelings, is often as easily put down as it is called up: a commotion that arises from it may be quelled even by the very sight of a power sufficiently strong to subdue it. So was it now; for the mob, who had hitherto talked, roared, and threatened so lustily, were somewhat confounded on observing at the end of the street a strong guard, not only of bills and glaives, but even of halberts, advancing under the conduct of no less a personage than the Mayor of Canterbury himself, who came to put down the riot in the market-place, by virtue of the Queen's proclamation against all rioting and riotous persons.

Had the Mayor and his party come armed with cudgels, and prepared to wage war with that national weapon, a stout fist, not a Kentishman present but would have stood his ground, and have fought, boxed, given and taken cuffs, cracked heads, and bloody noses, and would have cudgeled in support of Gammer Plaise, till the last bone in his skin had been broken. But halberts, bills, and glaives, were weapons of a very different kind, and things wholly beyond the practice of a village green or wake. The farmers, or their lads, could never stand them on equal terms; and the younger part of the assembled mob coupled the idea of the Mayor, who had presented himself before them, with that of whipping, the stocks, and a committal to Canterbury castle, so that they soon dropped their voices into silence; and even the farmers slunk back, chop-fallen, with low grumblings of complaint, like growling dogs before the upraised staff of their masters.

Still, even in the midst of this dispiriting change of scene, Gammer Plaise was not forgotten; and some of the more considerate in the assembly called out to her to get out of the way as fast as she could, and to take shelter in some house, till the Mayor of Canterbury, and the constables, and the

guard, should be past, for perhaps by this measure she might save herself from immediate detention.

Tommy heard the advice given in so friendly a manner to his grandmother; and instantly catching her by the gown, he exclaimed, "Come along with me—come along with me—I know where to take you; you'll be quite safe, come along." And turning to Arabella, who stood near the poor old woman, ready to sink down with vexation and alarm, he said to her softly, "Do, dear young lady, help on old granny, and I'll take her along with us to Master Edward's lodgings—she will be quite safe there."

Arabella, in common humanity, could not object to this proposal; and affording what assistance she could to Gammer Plaise, aided by the good-will of the mob, she managed to get off with Tommy and the poor woman. This retreat was made before the mayor and officers had reached the centre of the market-place, where the former was to read the proclamation, and to address the people in recommendation of a peaceful submission to her Grace's pleasure, which, if resisted, he should be compelled to enforce by the strong arm of the law, to say nothing of his men, who, already possessed of halberts, bills, and glaives, followed close at his tail, as old Gammer Plaise expressed it.

Tommy succeeded very well in piloting Arabella and his granny down sundry back streets and narrow alleys, to avoid the more public haunts of Canterbury. For though blind, the boy (who had lived in Canterbury till he was taken home by his grandmother after the death of his father) could find his way with surprising exactness, either by direct or indirect paths, to any part of the city; so that the present circuitous course was not at all beyond the power of his navigation. However, when Tommy came to the end of a certain narrow, dark, and dirty outlet, then known by the name of Rag Alley, he paused for a moment. "What do you stay for, child?" said Arabella, who was extremely impatient to reach the harbour of destination.

"I only wanted to listen, to know that all is safe," replied Tommy; "for this is a parading day, and I hope we shall not meet anybody to lett us."

"It is All-Saints day," said Gammer Plaise; "and a fine day the Romans and the Beast make of it, to parade about their images and their shows."

"Hush! hush! good wife," cried Arabella; "you forget where you are, or the mischief that may befal us, if you talk

so in the open streets. Only remember what you have escaped, and be silent. And I must beg of you not to talk so, in my hearing, of a church to which both my father and myself give obedience."

"I beg your pardon, young lady," said the old woman; "I did not know who you were, with that hood so close over your face; but I know you now that I hear your voice. And, dear heart! what can make you, Lady Arabella, to be along with my Tommy?"

"Pray do not notice who I am," replied Arabella; "I beg it of you as a favour, and especially now we are in the public streets." By this time the little party had issued out of the alley, and were crossing one of the largest and the broadest streets in Canterbury, near the Cathedral. Whilst so doing, the sounds of minstrelsy burst upon their ear; and ere the little party could ascertain whence these sounds proceeded, another circumstance arrested the attention of Arabella. This was nothing less than the procession of the host, as it returned from the house of a sick person, to whom it had been carried with the usual parade.

A boy walked foremost, ringing a bell that he carried in his hand; whilst others, dressed in scarlet and white robes, followed his steps, bearing high and lighted tapers along the streets. Next appeared a moving canopy, supported by four gilt pillars, each of which was held up by a priest.

And what were the feelings of Arabella when she saw walking beneath the canopy, and carrying the pyx that enclosed the host, no less a person than Friar John de Villa Garcina! She knew that the hood of the cloak which she had borrowed from Deborah must effectually prevent her from being known by the Friar; but still the mere conviction that she was so near him, and that he had crossed her path, caused her heart to beat quick and her limbs to tremble, though she thought there was no absolute ground for immediate alarm.

But in this Arabella was mistaken; for it might be either that things in this world do generally run counter when we would most desire them to run smooth; or that the demon of discord, who had so lately exerted his influence over the mob in the market-place, had been exorcised thence by the Mayor, and had resolved to be avenged, by stirring up strife somewhere else that evening in Canterbury, or by whatever other train of ill-luck the reader may choose to imagine, but certain it is, that a second, and ultimately a more serious, cause of alarm, now gave birth to a second uproar.

How this happened Arabella could not exactly tell, for she had turned her head aside the moment she recognised the Friar; Gammer Plaise's visual organs had long been dimmed by age, and Tommy was totally blind; so no one of them could see how the affair began, the first knowledge of it being communicated to them by their sense of hearing. A loud crash upon the pavement was followed by one united loud and tremendous cry uttered by all the persons about the canopy, and the words "Seize him! seize him! secure the wretch! he has rushed upon the Friar; he has knocked down the pyx!" met their ear.

In a moment the populace took the alarm, and hurried round this new scene of action; for any public disturbance, either for a good or a bad cause, is sure never to want witnesses, since curiosity and the excitement of an uproar seem to be feelings inherent throughout all generations. Arabella, her guide, and the old woman, were again stopped in their progress, and fairly hemmed in by the mob, and they now learned a confused account of the cause of this disturbance.

It appeared that an old man, in great haste, had suddenly issued from a by-street, at the very moment the Friar was passing the corner of it beneath the canopy, and that this man had either willingly, or (as he averred) unwittingly, in his extreme haste, dashed under the canopy in question, and brushed past the elbow of the Friar with such violence as to cause that holy man to drop the pyx from his hands. This was of course tumbled on the ground, and the top of it was broken, when, to add to the disaster, a villanous cur that followed close at the old man's heels, thinking perhaps that his master wished him to interfere, laid hold of the top of the broken pyx, and carried it off in his mouth, in the sight of every one assembled, scampering down the street, unharmed by a volley of stones sent after him as the readiest means of knocking out his brains.

The dog however escaped, and the vengeance which had hitherto been chiefly directed against this canine offender, was now levelled at his master, who was held by the collar, accused and abused with such vehemence by all present, that scarcely a word he uttered whilst attempting his defence, could be heard, and, without farther ceremony, the Friar ordered him off in custody of some of his own people to the house of Sir John Baker, justice of the peace, there to undergo his examination, and to plead whatever he might have to urge in mitigation of his offence.

"As sure as I live, granny," said Tommy, as he once more set forward to guide his party through this unlucky journey, "that old man was Abel Allen; I knew his voice in a moment, notwithstanding all the din they made about him; and I would wager a silver sixpence, if I had it, that the dog was Pincher. Poor Abel will get into a world of trouble; for Friar John, I am sure, hates him, because he serves Parson Wilford."

Little more was said, and in a few minutes Tommy completed his pilotage, and, going up to the door of a small house that stood in a respectable street of Canterbury, he rapped upon it with the end of a switch which he carried in his hand. The door was opened, and Tommy, Arabella, and his granny, passed on into the passage.

CHAPTER XVIII.

As soon as the little party arrived within Widow Littlewit's house, Tommy made the inquiry if Master Edward Wilford might be at home. The good widow replied in the negative, but said that he was expected home every minute, and that his servant, Abel Allen, had been sent in haste to another part of Canterbury to order horses for Master Edward, who was going off on a journey, she believed, that night. Arabella listened attentively to this discourse, and now ventured to express her desire to be allowed to remain in the house till Master Wilford's return, as she wished particularly to speak with him that evening.

Tommy, whose mind was engrossed by the danger that threatened his grandmother should she be retaken, for the present thought of nothing else, and said very innocently to the widow, "I know, good Dame Littlewit, you are not one of those wicked people who like to give up their neighbours to be burnt, and to be put into prison, because they won't do what God forbids them—to kneel down and worship images, and serve the Pope as if he were the Almighty."

"The Lord forbid!" replied Widow Littlewit—laying a strong emphasis on the word Lord, which now, in common discourse, was used by those who wished to shew by their language that they were Reformers and not Papists—"The Lord forbid! All Canterbury knows me, though sometimes I have hid what I am from certain folks: yet I have often wondered that they let me and my poor baby bide in peace. But I am poor; and though I don't go to mass, yet I set a watch upon my tongue; for, as brother Allen says, a close tongue makes a wise head; and, 'be prudent, Sister Littlewit,' says he, 'and there's no call for you to be talking to others about *logical* affairs, unless they first propose religious talk to you. And so I keep the house and hold my peace, and so I suppose that I owe to a close tongue, being still suffered to use it with my head on my shoulders."

"I wish granny had done so too," cried Tommy, "and then she might have been safe now. But she never would hold her peace when anybody named the Queen, or Bonner, or any of those cruel people."

"I hold my peace!" said the old Gammer. "I be dumb, when the wicked go by my door that they have bathed with the blood of my son—my only son—and thy father, thou poor dark child! And if I did hold my peace, the very stones would cry out upon them."

"Now do let me speak, granny," said Tommy, "and you shall talk as fast as you like by and by; only do let me tell all about it to good Widow Littlewit, and I am sure she will hide you if she can for the present, for there is no going back to Wellminster for you. You see, good Widow Littlewit, that we were taken up for heresy, and for witchcraft, and—"

Tommy, who could never separate the idea of himself from that of his grandmother, had made use of the word we, which deceived the widow; who, on hearing it, instantly exclaimed, "Good Lord! And you don't say so?"

"Yes, but I do," continued Tommy; "and it is as true as that I am stone-blind. They took us up; but the people going home from market saved us, and rolled the catchpole and the constable in the kennel: and so I brought granny here, to ask you to hide us for the night, till the search is over after us; for I didn't know what else to do: and so I am sure you won't turn us out. And the lady here, who, I know, has a thing over her face, is a fine grand lady, though she be come with granny and me, and she will tell you all about what she wants when Master Edward comes home. But pray don't talk more now, but lose no time to hide granny."

"I will do my best," replied the widow; "and that's all a poor woman can do; though my house is a poor house to hide in, for I have but one tidy room, the little wainscot parlour; and I have no hiding-holes at all, not so much as a dark closet big enough to hold a baby; and my door has no strong bolts and bars; though if it had, and I made them fast, they would not be fast long, if halberts and bills came afore them with a justice's warrant stuck at the end of each of them.—But here, step into the little parlour, and lock the door when you get in. It is the lodger Master Edward's room; and if anybody comes, I can then swear safely, you know, that I dare not go into it; and if he comes himself, you have nothing to fear, and he won't disturb you."

"Have you no other room," said Arabella, "in which we could enter till his return?"

"None upon earth," replied the widow. "But don t fear Master Edward; for, dear heart! his father is in trouble up at the Castle yonder; and Master Edward is as kind a soul as

ever broke bread, though somewhat moloncholy, and not much given to say more words than he can help. So do step in, and I'll befriend you all, for the love of the true Church and King Edward's Cathechism; for 'tis pity innocent people should come to harm because they do none."

The honest widow was something loquacious, and, being in the habit of keeping a watch over her tongue, as she herself declared, when in doubtful company, she held it but a fair remuneration to indulge herself in the pleasure of hearing the sounds of her own voice, when she could do so with a full confidence in the good faith of her auditors; so that, though Arabella had once or twice attempted to speak, the widow talked so fast and so freely, she could not get in a word. "I am sure," cried Dame Littlewit, in a tone of alarm—"I am sure I heard somebody at the door; so do get into the room before anybody can hear you talking so fast (though nobody was speaking but herself), and I will do the best I can to conceal you. I'll hide you, I warrant."

The honest woman hurried them all into Master Edward's apartment; and having heard them turn the key in the inside, she hastened to see who might be at the door. Arabella, who could not help feeling a little abashed even before old Gammer Plaise, at her thus seeking young Wilford, now endeavoured to account for it; and said, with truth, that she was desirous to speak to him, before she went to visit his unhappy sister in Canterbury Castle, the nature of whose misfortune she detailed at large to the old woman.

When Gammer Plaise heard the tale of Rose's having been burnt in the hand, a torrent of indignation burst from her lips in language so bold and forcible, that Arabella was astonished by her vehemence, and alarmed lest she should be overheard. She conjured the poor woman to moderate her feelings; and, in order to turn her attention if possible into another channel, she entered upon the subject of the remedies she had in charge for the relief of Rose. Gammer Plaise's wrath was for a moment diverted, and she proceeded to undo the packet that held them, and to examine each article with medical precision, tasting the fever mixture, and commenting upon it with as much zeal and interest as if it had been a remedy of her own preparation. She pronounced a favourable opinion of the drug, eagerly desired the remedies might be applied without delay, and again replaced them carefully in the packet.

Whilst this was passing, Widow Littlewit was very differently engaged with no less a person than Master Edward himself,

who had returned home, and was walking hastily forward towards the door of the chamber that he occupied as a lodger. But ere he could reach it, his landlady begged so earnestly that he would grant her an audience for ten minutes, that he could not refuse to comply with her request. The widow then opened her discourse, something like a sermon of the period, by divisions, and sub-divisions, into first, second, and third parts, commencing by an eulogium on her own prudence in the government of the tongue, which she began and ended, notwithstanding every interjectional effort of her impatient hearer to solicit her to come to the matter of her discourse.

Secondly, she dilated on the kindness of her heart and the goodness of her disposition; on her willingness to do what she could for the relief of the afflicted members of the Reformed church; and this bringing to her mind the venerable Owen Wilford, the good woman here diverged a little even from the second division of her subject, by a long and feeling harangue, expressive of her sorrow for the fate of the father of her hearer, and for his own, in being beset with so many enemies. This bringing to mind that there were enemies that laid in wait to rob the traveller on his way, she thought of her lodger's intended journey, and, making a second digression on this point, she ventured to express her hopes that Master Edward was not going away from any cause of discontent, since she was desirous to do all that a lone woman could do to make him comfortable in her house.

Edward Wilford satisfied her on this head in two words; and saying that as his preparations for that journey were pressing, he must wish her a good evening, once more was about to move towards the door of his apartment, but the widow interposed her person between him and this intent, and, assuring him that what she had to say was of the utmost consequence, Edward consented to listen, on condition that she would disclose it in a few words.

In compliance with this request, she cut short the third division of her discourse; and instead of entering upon a full explanation of the various doctrinal points that caused her to hold in detestation the Pope and the Bishop of London, she contented herself with a sweeping anathema against them, fairly and roundly wishing his Holiness, the Queen, Bonner, and Thornton, at the devil, since they had conspired to lay violent hands upon some innocent people, whom she averred Master Edward knew very well as his father's old parish-

ioners at Wellminster. Then she told him they had been taken up for heresy, rescued by the mob, who had interfered in their behalf, and had rolled the catchpoles, with Thornton and Harpsfield (a small addition of the widow's, in her own exact way of telling the story), in the kennel, and that these parsecuted lambs, for so she styled them, one of whom she admitted to be an old woman, had now taken refuse, as she was pleased to say, in Master Edward's room, there being no other place in all the house in which she could hope to hide them.

"I am truly sorry for them," said Edward, "and they are most welcome to the shelter of my room; but I want some papers that are in that chamber to carry with me on my journey, and thither I must go instantly, my good hostess, to procure them."

And thither Edward was going, when a tremendous knocking, or rather assault, upon the house-door, alarmed both him and the widow. "As sure as I'm an honest woman," said she, "they are come here to seek these poor people. For heaven's sake, Master Edward, do come along with me to the door; they will beat it down, if I do not open it to them; and I am but a lone woman to meet such a gang of fellows as that Thornton sends into whose houses he may please in Canterbury. Do come along with me. Bless my heart! do but hear how they knock and rap! The Lord help me! or I am a lost woman, as sure as my name is Littlewit."

Edward followed her, and the instant she opened the door, a whole army of bills appeared before her sight, headed by lawyer Cluny, who was supported on the right hand by catchpole Miller, and on the left, by the town constable, both of whom still bore about their persons the 'filthy witness' of the kennel into which they had been so lately rolled by the valiant farmers.

Cluny, who was one of those brave men whose courage is never daunted when sure of the support of numbers, came boldly forward, and demanded in the Queen's name the body of one Martha Plaise, commonly called Gammer Plaise, who had escaped by violent means from lawful custody, and was seen by a person now present, who had deposed to the same, to have taken shelter in the house of Widow Littlewit, in company with two other suspected persons, the one being a blind boy commonly called Tommy, and the other an unknown female muffled in a cloak.

The sight of Cluny—the gravity with which he made this

solemn address to the widow in the language of the law, the appearance of the bespattered catchpole and constable, together with the bills, etc. so overcame Dame Littlewit, that, notwithstanding her desire to serve her persecuted lambs, she no longer persisted in the attempt, nor could she deny the truth, but fell to imploring mercy on herself as a poor lone widow who had a young child, and who, as she declared, thought it no harm, only just to let two or three poor people into her house. More especially, when one of them came to Master Edward on particular business, and was now in his room for the same purpose; this was the female muffled in a cloak, about whose name or business she averred she was as ignorant as the babe unborn, only she was sure it must be something private, and she was also quite sure that if such a person had not wanted to see her lodger, neither Gammer Plaise, nor blind Tommy, nor anybody else, should have darkened her door that evening.

"Good woman," said Cluny, "this statement quite alters the case, as far as you are concerned in it, that is, if you can bring evidence to prove it, since it will clear you of the charge of aiding and abetting, or concealing, any prisoner or prisoners under cognizance of the law, in matters of capital offence, contrary to the statute and the late proclamation issued by her Majesty and council. Be pleased to shew me the way to where these people are. Catchpole Miller, come along with me."

The widow curtsied and curtsied to Cluny at every word he spoke, and was now advancing to lead the way to the chamber, where the objects of his inquiry were concealed, but Edward Wilford interposed with a determined air, and said in a cool but firm voice, "That apartment is mine, so long as I pay rent for it, and no person shall enter it without my consent, unless he can produce a legal warrant for so doing. Threats will not pass current with me, whatever they may do with this simple woman."

Cluny looked surprised, but, taking a paper from under his sleeve, he replied, with his usual effrontery, "There is the warrant, granted by Sir John Baker, knight, and one of her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the county of Kent; it is legally drawn up, I assure you, for I indited it myself, by his order, being clerk to that worthy magistrate, as well as secretary to the Reverend Suffragan Bishop of Dover; shall I rehearse the matter of it?"

"Be pleased to let me read it," said Wilford; "I shall not

resist lawful authority, but I insist upon seeing that it is lawful."

"Very proper," replied Cluny, "exactly right; treating the matter quite in a legal way; you will be satisfied, if you do but run your eye over it."

"There you are mistaken," said Edward; "I am not at all satisfied, nor shall I suffer you to force yourself into my chamber upon a warrant such as this is."

"Be pleased to state your objection," answered Cluny; "I think there can be no flaw in the indictment, nor any want of formality. The woman has no alias, and her name is correctly spelt, proper date and all, and—"

"This warrant," said Wilford, "expressly states that you are empowered to arrest the body of Martha Plaise, in the parish of Wellminster; it can have no effect in Canterbury, since it is not so expressed; and I will not suffer it to be executed in my lodgings in this city. I know the poor old creature very well; she was a parishioner of my father's, honest and useful in her station; and I will protect her against you, since in doing so, I act but according to the law you are so fond of advocating." And saying these words, Edward Wilford placed himself against the chamber-door in a posture of defiance.

Cluny was nothing abashed; but, ordering the catchpole and town constable, with some half-dozen of bills, to rally round him, then to advance and do their duty in the Queen's name, he not only directed them to force the door, but also to begin hostilities, by first arresting, securing, and seizing the body of Edward Wilford, for having presumed to interrupt the officers of the law in the execution of their duty; saying to Wilford, with a smile of ineffable contempt, "You shew your ignorance of the law of the land, Master Wilford; the woman was arrested in the parish of Wellminster, according to the letter of the warrant, but having escaped the hands of the officers in Canterbury, she becomes liable to be retaken anywhere, by virtue of the statute, without farther authority—be pleased to stand out of the way."

Edward, who, as the reader is already aware, was of a passionate temper, fired at Cluny's insolent manner, replied to him warmly, and being answered with yet greater insolence, a scuffle ensued, since, confident in his own strength, and holding both Cluny and his attendants in the utmost contempt, the impetuous and hotheaded young man madly attempted a fruitless resistance. But, strong, active, and bold as he was,

Edward Wilford was overpowered by numbers and secured. The attorney instantly ordered him to be conveyed off the scene of action to the house of that worthy magistrate, Sir John Baker; directing he should there be held apart from any one, till he (Cluny) should arrive with the rest of the prisoners, when he purposed to state the whole matter to the justice, before Master Wilford could have any opportunity of consulting or caballing with those prisoners. The attorney was obeyed: Edward Wilford was carried off to Sir John Baker's, and there shut up in a room by himself; and soon after, the redoubted Cluny arrived, having in custody the three suspected persons, viz.—old Gammer Plaise, Blind Tommy, and an unknown female muffled in a cloak.

When these last-named parties were ushered into the chamber of the justice of the peace, Sir John, with all the importance of his office, seated himself at the head of a table, and made his clerk, Thomas Cluny, sit down by him. The attorney opened the case, and stated at large those circumstances already known to the reader, the same being deposed to by catchpole Miller and the town constable. Here the case (as we may call it) for the Crown closed; and the Justice called upon Tommy to come forward, in order to examine him, either as a witness or as a party concerned, for Sir John himself did not seem to know which. His brains were at all times muddled,—and this evening, both sack, canary, and home-brewed, had helped to give them an additional shake.

"Please your Worship," said Tommy, as he came forward, "what may I have done amiss?"

"Done amiss, you young sprig of sin," cried Sir John; "why, have not you been guilty of the crime of aiding and abetting, as my clerk here says, that abominable old woman to escape from the hands of the law, when she is accused of the heavy offences of heresy and witchcraft?"

"Do you know the consequences of such an act?" said Cluny; "do you know what you are liable to? Do you know the statute?"

"I know nothing about it," replied Tommy; "but I will tell you all I do know about granny."

"Ay, ay, let us hear that, my lad," said Sir John Baker; "I dare say, you know a great deal about her; and your proper behaviour, to give evidence to convict such a notorious offender, shall not want encouragement, I assure you."

"I know," continued Tommy, "that I had an honest man to my father, and that the cruel people up in London burnt

him at Smithfield, and I was left poor, fatherless, and blind; and I had not a friend in the world, for everybody said I was the son of a heretic, and so I deserved to go to be burnt, as father was before me. And then my old granny took me home to her, and kept me as well as she could, and toiled hard to do it; though she could not have done it neither, if Parson Wilford had not helped her; and she taught me to be a good boy, and to say my prayers; and she used to read the Bible to me herself, and let Mistress Rose teach me to play upon the virginals; and granny was always good to me and to everybody; and that's all I know about her; and if I did help her to get off from the catchpole, when the boys rolled him in the kennel, I am glad of it, and I would do so again now, if I could. And if you mean, as you said, to encourage me to talk against granny, you would be a wicked man, instead of a Justice of the Peace; for I could not do that without telling a lie, and all liars are to go into the burning pit, as the Scripture book says."

"Why, you impudent young heretic! you scurvy little beast!" said Sir John; "do you dare to stand before one of her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, and to glory in having assisted in obstructing the execution of the laws?—I think, Cluny, this offence comes under the statute?"

"Certainly under the proclamation," replied Cluny.

"Youngster," said Sir John Baker, "you ought to know, as my friend, the Reverend Bishop of London, says, that when father, mother, grandmother, or brother, are proved to be heretics, children from that moment are absolved from all obedience to them by the Pope's decree."

"But not by God's decree, I am sure," answered Tommy; "and I don't know what you mean by heretics; for, if they are wicked people, and don't say their prayers, granny can never be a heretic."

"You have been finely taught, I see," replied Sir John.

"And, I suppose," said Cluny, "that you know nothing, forsooth, of this old woman's doings here; you have never seen her raise the devil?"

"Alack, no!" replied Tommy; "I could no more see him than I could see you, Master Attorney, if he now stood at your elbow; for I am blind, and cannot see wickedness; though I know what it is, by what you are doing to granny."

"But did you never hear your granny conjure, boy?" said Sir John Baker; "did you never hear her conjure, as witches do?"

"What does it mean?" inquired Tommy.

"Why—why, conjuring, boy," replied the Justice, something puzzled by the question; "conjuring is conjuring; a—a sort of a calling up of the Evil Spirit by forbidden arts."

"By mystical signs and ceremonies," cried Cluny; "uttering strange words, using abominations, and turning God's word into unlawful practices; making it a warrant to obtain vile ends, wholly against the truth, and to the injury of one's neighbour."

"Why, then, conjuring is like being a Justice of the Peace," replied Tommy; "for I am sure it can't be worse than Sir John Baker's warrant against granny, to put her into prison who never hurt a living soul."

"What! did she never entice people to her house," said Sir John, "to satisfy them, by telling them who had their stolen goods? Did they never come to her to find lost spoons?"

"Why, I can't say," answered Tommy; "but I did once know granny tell a poor woman about such a thing as that."

"Speak it, you young rogue!—speak it this moment," cried Sir John, "or I will have you in the stocks."

"Answer his Worship, boy, this instant," said Cluny; "you may be compelled to do so by the statute."

"If I must, I must," said Tommy, "though I am sure you will not like to hear it, Master Attorney; for two years ago, when Widow Littlewit lost her silver caudle-spoon, granny did tell her she was sure you stole it, when you lodged in her house, at the Old Magpie, and went away without paying the widow her money."

"You rascally young heretic!" cried Cluny, "how dare you utter scandal and libels in the very face of justice? But I see what you are; you are dangerous, though young; and his Worship will do well to look to you, and to hear how you can answer on certain points of the faith, for I suspect you are as great a heretic as your granny. Your Worship will examine the lad."

"To be sure, I will," replied Sir John. "What must I ask him, clerk? You are used to these things in Master Thornton's house."

"His Worship would inquire of you, boy," continued Cluny, "if you ever attend mass, go to confession, and receive holy bread and water, and observe other rites of the church of Rome, once more so happily established in these realms. Why don't you answer?"

"Because his Worship don't ask me about it," said Tommy.

"But my clerk does," cried Sir John, "and that's all the same thing. Answer directly to the questions."

"No," replied Tommy; "I was taught by Parson Wilford and granny to say King Edward's Cathechism and the Ten Commandments, and there is nothing about what you talk of in either of them."

"Then you don't worship the rood, and pray to our Lady the Virgin Mary?" said Cluny.

"No," answered Tommy; "I worship God, and I never said my prayers to any lady but Mistress Rose, when she taught me how to say them night and morning."

"Commit him, clerk,—commit the rascal heretic instantly," cried Sir John Baker; "he is young in years, but old in iniquity."

"What!" exclaimed old Gammer Plaise, who had hitherto observed a profound silence, during this examination of her grandson; "what, do you sit there, like Herod, in his purples and in his robes, to hold the rod of power, to slay babes and innocents? You and your wicked people took my son and burnt him, and will you now take my son's son, the only remaining prop of my years, the last green leaf upon my withered branch, and he, too, a poor thing as dark as night?"

"That's nothing to do with it," said Sir John; "was not Joan Waste blind, and did not she suffer for heresy? and didn't my Right Reverend friend, the Bishop of London, burn a rascally blind old harper, ay, and a blind boy too, for the truth sake?—these, I think, be examples."

"Yes," cried Gammer Plaise, "and they are examples of blood, that shall cast you, and Bonner, and all of you, into the burning pit, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth; and then shall you cry out to bid this poor innocent to bring you but a drop of water to slake the thirst of your tongue, and he shall answer you, as Abraham did to Dives, between thee and me there is a great gulf fixed."

"Silence that old woman, Cluny," said Sir John, "or, if she will talk, bid her teach her grandson better things, and let him save himself, while yet he may, by worshipping God in our way."

"I bid him turn to your way!" cried his grandmother, with fury in her looks—"No, I thank my God, that the last remnant that is left of a poor thing like me, is made worthy to suffer. I will bid him run to the stake and embrace it, rather than to you and to your filthy idols. And as to worshipping as you worship! I will tell you, Sir John, who is

your God—your God is your belly; and you think more of a posset of warm ale, and a feast of the creature, than ever you did in all your life of the feast of God's promise."

"Hold your tongue, old woman," cried Cluny, "or you shall be gagged; the statute allows it, to prevent heretical doctrines and railings from being spread abroad."

"Yes, Thomas Cluny," continued the old woman, "you will gag my tongue, when it tells you truth; when it tells what you are, and that your god is Mammon."

"Push her aside," said Sir John, "and bring forward that other prisoner. Catchpole, bring forward that woman so closely muffled up in the cloak and hood."

Arabella, trembling, and ready to sink into the earth, was now thrust forward. "Who are you, mistress?" said Sir John; "and how came you in company with this old beldame?"

"I did not come with her," replied Arabella.

"Not come with her!" said Cluny; "you were found all together locked up in the same room—the room occupied by Master Edward Wilford (now in custody in the next chamber), at Widow Littlewit's house."

"I was there with her by chance," answered Arabella.

"By chance!" cried Cluny; "why, Mistress Littlewit is ready to depose, that you came with the intent to meet her lodger, Master Wilford."

Here the examination was interrupted by a bustling movement, that was heard by all present; it seemed to come from the hall of entry. The chamber-door was now opened, and who shall speak the surprise and dismay of Arabella, when she saw her father enter, accompanied by Friar John, Sir Francis Morgan, and Samuel Collins, as Abel Allen followed close behind them, in the custody of the Friar's attendants.

CHAPTER XIX.

Sir John Baker rose up to receive the Sheriff of the County as he entered, and Arabella shrunk back into a remote part of the chamber, dreading that discovery which she now feared must be inevitable, yet willing to protract it to the last moment.

"How is this, Sir Richard?" said the Justice, as he addressed the Sheriff; "you are returned very suddenly from Dover; we did not look for you in Canterbury for some days to come."

"My return was hastened by peculiar circumstances," replied Sir Richard Southwell. "I found it necessary I should hasten here, in order to despatch some letters of consequence by a sure hand to the Council, and I was proceeding to my own house, when I met Friar John and Sir Francis Morgan, who were coming hither with this man, charged with a great offence—the crime being no less than that of having insulted the holy Father whilst engaged in a sacred office, in casting the pyx upon the ground, where it was broken, and shamefully dishonoured, even by a brute. The Friar told me of this, and begged me to proceed with him to your house, to be present at his examination. Sir Francis, too, has communicated to me a matter so serious, that it is absolutely necessary it should come under the cognizance of the civil law without delay."

"Why, here is matter upon matter," said Sir John Baker, "and we of the commission, Sir Richard, can scarce find time to take rest in our beds for these naughty times and rascal heretics. Look at that old woman, as arrant a witch, I assure you, as ever rode upon a broomstick; as foul-mouthed a Lutheran as ever lied in the throat. And that imp there, that stands by her side, fit for nothing but a stake and a tar-barrel, I promise you; a proper fry for a red-hot fagot he will make, as my Right Reverend friend, the Bishop of London, says. And then, there we have, in the next room, Master Edward Wilford, the old heretic parson's son, who sheltered these people, and knocked about my officers like nine-pins. And there's a jade muffled in a cloak and hood, and found in

Master Edward's lodging, and nobody knows who she is. I was just going to examine the quean when you came in. I am glad that you are come, since your help may be useful. Catchpole Miller, bring forward the jade, and I'll make her give an account of herself."

The affrighted Arabella was now brought forward.

"Who are you, slut?" continued Sir John; "and how came you into Master Edward Wilford's lodgings? Take off that muffler, that hood, and let us see your face. Do it this moment, or I will set the catchpole about you."

"It shall not need," replied Arabella, in a low voice; "I have done nothing for which I need blush, when the motive of my conduct is explained. But I disclaim your authority, Sir John Baker, whilst Sir Richard Southwell is here present. If he commands me to discover who I am, I will do it. I make my appeal to him."

"Satisfy the magistrate, I beseech you, young woman," said Sir Richard; "let him see your face."

"Sir Richard Southwell commands it, and I obey my father," said Arabella, as she threw back her hood and cloak; "and now, I do beseech you, however circumstances may seem to condemn me, that you, my dearest father, will not condemn me unheard."

Sir Richard was overpowered by his astonishment, and he could only exclaim, "Holy Virgin, my daughter!"

"The Lady Arabella!" cried Sir Francis Morgan; "then all my worst fears are true."

"Here's a goodly business, indeed!" said Sir John Baker. "Master Edward Wilford, I find, had good cause to resist the entrance of my officers into his lodgings, when he had secreted this worthy knight's daughter in them."

"He is innocent," said Arabella: "he had no knowledge of my being there, since I sought him by my own will."

"Good heaven! what is this I hear!" exclaimed Sir Richard; "can it be my own child who has practised so much deception against me?"

"It is your own child, your guilty and deceitful child, said Friar John, "and Edward Wilford is the man who has thus seduced her from her obedience to you. Sir Richard, I am sorry to be the means of communicating to you what must be so painful to the feelings of a father, but Sir Francis Morgan, by a train of extraordinary circumstances, discovered that Edward Wilford had this night formed a plan to fly from Canterbury, and in company with your daughter."

"It is false," said Arabella,—"it is most false. Edward Wilford knew not that I was in his lodgings; and my purpose, in visiting Canterbury this night, was in a great measure to see, and to afford relief, to his unhappy sister, who is languishing in prison from the effects of a cruel torture. I can prove this, since I have brought with me the very means to afford her assistance."

"Your own account condemns you," said the Friar. "Had your purpose been only to visit Rose in the prison, the way to it did not lie by first seeking the dwelling of her brother."

"What purpose could take you there," said Sir Richard,—"to a place so unworthy yourself and your character?"

"My purpose," replied Arabella, "was to warn him of danger."

"What danger?—What warning?" cried Sir Richard;—"I beseech you, tell me truth."

"I have told it already, my father," answered Arabella; "and, would you know more, I would implore you to hear me in private, as some things I must relate, it might be dangerous to mention before such as I know are here."

"No!" replied Southwell; "you have been publicly accused, and you shall be as publicly vindicated or condemned. The cause now is not between father and daughter, but a matter of common justice; for the transactions I have recently discovered at Dover render it necessary that all persons connected with Edward Wilford should be known in their true light. Once more, I solemnly conjure you to declare plainly—did he expect you—did he know of your being secreted in his lodgings?"

"He did not!" said Arabella. "Send for him hither. He will vindicate my fame."

"Let Edward Wilford be brought hither," said Sir Richard.

"He is but in the next chamber," replied the Justice:—"Catchpole Miller! bring hither the prisoner."

The catchpole left the room, in order to obey this order. Sir Richard Southwell looked upon his daughter, and exclaimed, "Oh, Arabella! have I lived to see this hour—to see the child that I have loved with so much affection thus shamed in the face of all the world! And could you thus forget all my tenderness and care of you, thus to render broken-hearted a fond and foolish father, even in his old age? Your deceit hurts me more than all. I could not have believed it. I thought you good and innocent, incapable of falsehood."

"Here comes the man," said the Friar, "who has robbed you of the duty of your child."

Edward Wilford was brought into the chamber. On seeing Arabella, he uttered an involuntary exclamation of surprise; and then, as if recolleeting himself, he bowed slightly to Sir John Baker and with cold formality to Sir Richard Southwell, and darted a fierce glance expressive of angry feeling upon Morgan, whilst the flush of resentment overspread his cheek.

For a moment no one spoke, till Edward asked for what purpose he was called in before the civil magistrates. "For one that you shall hear of anon," said Sir John Baker. "But you must first answer some questions that will be put to you by my brother magistrate, Sir Richard Southwell, in respect to his daughter."

"I would ask you, young man," said Sir Richard, with the utmost severity of manner and countenance, "and for your own sake, I would ask you to make a frank avowal,—what do you know of this unhappy woman, who, I grieve to think, is my daughter, and who, I understand, was found to be secreted in a mysterious manner in your lodgings? You resisted the entrance of the officers of justice, and I must think on that account."

"I was wholly ignorant," said Edward, "that your daughter, the Lady Arabella, was in my apartment, as she herself can tell you. This is no crime. And let me ask you, Sir Richard, by what authority you would interrogate me? We are in England; and heaven forbid that the Spanish Inquisition should be set on foot on English ground!"

"I have full authority to deal with you," replied Sir Richard, "as I shall presently make it appear. But if not for your own, I would conjure you, for this woman's sake, to declare plainly what you know of her extraordinary conduct this night. You must have been acquainted with the place of her concealment?"

"Then, for her sake," said Edward Wilford, "I will again answer you, that the innocent may not suffer for one so unfortunate as I am—I know nothing of the matter."

"Come, come," said Friar John, "here I must interfere. This will not do. I suppose you know nothing of your interview with the Lady Arabella in my church this morning?"

"And I conclude," added Morgan, "that you were ignorant of having secured horses to bear her away from Canterbury this night during the expected absence of her father?"

"And I suppose," continued the Friar, "you will declare yourself ignorant of the plot that has been carried on between the French, the Protestant exiles in Germany, and the discon-

tented Reformers in England, once more to raise rebellion, and to assist the French to land upon our Kentish coasts, as they lately did in Yorkshire?"

"I am, indeed, ignorant of what you accuse me," said Wilford, as he looked with unfeigned astonishment mingled with indignation upon the parties, who followed up their accusations, the one so quick upon the other, that he could not possibly reply to them.

Nothing could be more irregular or unjust than this mode of procedure against Edward. But Sir John Baker allowed it without interruption, since he knew well how acceptable would be any disgrace that might befal the family of Wilford to the higher powers.* He did not, therefore, feel the least desire to prevent the present attempt to ruin the son of so noted a heretic; and the injured feelings of Sir Richard Southwell (who believed Edward designed to rob him of his daughter) availed, in spite of himself, to prejudice him against this unhappy young man.

Edward persisted in disclaiming all knowledge of Arabella being in his lodgings, and of the other charges so suddenly and violently brought against him. Whilst he was doing so, Sir Richard started from his seat, and exclaimed with more passion than judgment, "Your word, I fear, is wholly unworthy of credit; I can prove some things brought against you that you have denied: how then can I trust you in the matter that relates to my child? I fear you have practised upon her mind, to corrupt her truth, as you have her obedience."

"She is innocent—so help me heaven!" exclaimed Wilford; "she is entirely innocent:—for myself I say nothing; as I am convinced all these accusations, some of which bear the colour of truth solely by a perversion of it, are framed, and will be supported, to destroy me. I am here, defenceless, and in your power; and I have no means to rebut the shafts of villany where prejudice and passion are already prepared to receive whatever may be asserted as truth."

"If you mean that to me, young man," said Sir Richard,

* The Privy Council being informed that certain Justices of the Peace were disposed to be indulgent to the Protestants, so far interfered that they sent them instructions to act in future more in conformity with the intentions of the Court; and enjoined that Justices of the Peace should have spies in every parish, for giving information of all persons who were of the Reformed faith.—*See* Burnet and Strype.

Rapin, in speaking of this, says, "It was so like an inquisition that it was imputed to the counsels of the Spaniards, which rendered them extremely odious."

"you are in error; for though I cannot doubt, by the circumstances now brought before me, that you have tampered with the mind of this unhappy woman, to make her forget what is due to her own character and to me as her father; though you designed this night to steal her from me; yet even to you I would give every opportunity to vindicate yourself, if it were possible, from the many charges brought against you,—but facts you cannot deny. I am in the Commission, as well as Sir John Baker, and with his leave I will examine you myself."

"It will be useless, wholly useless," replied Edward; "for I am convinced this is a conspiracy made on purpose to entrap me, and to deceive you, Sir Richard."

"That cannot be," said Southwell; "since I examined, myself, certain suspected persons at Dover, and found upon them many letters, concerting a sudden rising with the discontented party in England; and you were expressly named in those letters, for having left Frankfort to obtain supplies for the Protestants from certain merchants in London, with Master Bowyer at their head; and your delay in bringing these supplies was complained of, as it was stated nothing could be done till you did bring them. What have you to answer to this charge?"

"I answer," said Wilford, "by saying, that I did come into England to obtain such supplies to assist the exiled Protestants at Frankfort, for they were in great necessity. But if any of those Protestants meditated a league with France to stir up the discontented to rebellion in England—to that point, I answer, I am wholly innocent; and my delay to procure such supplies was occasioned by finding, on my arrival, that my father was a prisoner on a cruel charge."

"This is plausible," said Sir Richard, "and would pass current but for one circumstance. Master Bowyer is a prisoner in the Marshalsea, by order of the Council, on suspicion; therefore you could not obtain the supplies. And the simple fact, which you admit, that you came into England expressly to obtain them for a Protestant party, now discovered to be in league with France, is a circumstance alone sufficient to convict you. In this you will allow there can be no conspiracy against you."

"And if there needed more evidence to prove your treasonable practices," said the Friar, "I would only ask you, if you know your own handwriting.—Sir Francis Morgan, be pleased to produce the papers."

Morgan obeyed; and as he tendered them to Sir Richard Southwell, he said, "There, Sir Richard, are copies of letters written by this young man to the late Sir Thomas Wyatt, who was executed for rebellion. They will shew what was Edward Wilford's disposition towards Queen Mary at that time; a strong presumptive evidence that the man who could once allow himself to be intreated to join rebellion, would not now hesitate to join these exiles against England."

"It is a natural inference," said Sir Richard, "though I cannot admit it as proof. How do you answer this charge respecting the letters?"

"Read them," replied Edward Wilford; "they will speak for themselves. All I should say would be useless, for, I see, you are determined to think me guilty."

"Good heaven!" exclaimed Sir Richard, "the first expression is sufficient to convict you. Here you call the Queen a blood-thirsty bigot! and that you, like your father, consider the Church of Rome the Antichrist of the Prophet!"

"High-treason!" cried Sir John Baker—"high-treason as ever was uttered, and comes immediately under the letter of the Proclamation."

"And here you say," continued Sir Richard, "that the sentence executed on the Lady Jane Gray and her husband was cruel and murderous; that Jane ought to have been acquitted, since she could not, in justice, be held guilty of usurpation, inasmuch as Edward the Sixth, by his last will, named her his successor to the crown."

"Downright treason!" cried Sir John.

"And again," said Southwell, "you write that Bonner is no better than a tiger—an inhuman wretch, worse than a savage."

"Positive blasphemy!" cried Sir John Baker; "what, to call my Right Reverend friend a savage!—Oh, thou shameless varlet! thou filthy Lutheran!—thou—thou shalt suffer for this."

"And you protest in this letter," continued Southwell, "that if the life of the Princess Elizabeth is really in danger from the machinations of Gardiner and the Queen, you will take up arms, and spend the last drop of your blood in her defence."

"Open rebellion!" cried Sir John Baker. "You will have a sharp account to settle for this, young man; that I promise you.—Clerk, make out his committal."

"Stay a while," said Sir Richard, "we have discovered

much, and may discover more. But whatever is done, it shall be done justly. My private wrongs shall not interfere to the injury of this accused man.—Sir Francis Morgan, there is one point on which I must demand an explanation of you. If you have, as it appears, for some time possessed these papers, proving the traitorous connexion of your guilty kinsman with Sir Thomas Wyatt, why have you thus long concealed the matter, and why is it brought forward now?"

"I confess my error," said Morgan; "and that I wished at one time to have suppressed them, in the hope to save Edward."

"It is false! most false!" exclaimed Arabella: "here I can convict you. I beseech you, sir," she continued, turning to her father, "however much circumstances yet unexplained may induce you to condemn me, that you will hear me speak. I can shew Sir Francis Morgan in his true character; I can prove him a villain. Those papers he held back, on purpose to use them as the means to act upon my mind, to draw me into a compliance with his arbitrary claim upon my hand.—Dare you, Sir Francis, deny the truth? Did you not do so?"

"Yes, I did so, indeed," replied Morgan: "and since you, Lady Arabella, force me to be explicit, the truth must be spoken; though, for your sake, I would gladly have concealed it. I will confess the whole matter of this day's transactions to your father."

"What! have you, too, seen my daughter before now, to-day?" cried Sir Richard; "this is most extraordinary; it was her own request, that you, Sir Francis, should be denied all access to her during my absence; and she promised also (I grieve to think she could so abuse the kindness of a father), that if I would but grant her liberty to be the mistress of her own actions during my absence, she would hold no intercourse with any one till my return."

"I did! I did!" said Arabella; and she burst into tears as she spoke; "but you do not know, you have not heard the cruel circumstances by which I have been induced to break my promise."

"No circumstances could have occurred to induce you, lady," said Friar John, "to break that promise, had you not voluntarily made use of the liberty that was allowed you by your father, to seek his greatest enemy; to hold a meeting with that criminal who stands before us. And you deceived me too; for you told me but yesterday, that you should not quit your chamber till your father's return. Yet a few hours after, you

are detected holding a meeting with Edward Wilford, even before the very tomb that contains the ashes of your mother. Respect for her memory should, at least, have taught you to consider as sacred that spot, and not to make it, as you have done, the scene of disobedience to your father."

"Did my daughter do this?" exclaimed Sir Richard; "could she have the heart to do it?—Oh, Arabella! do not turn to me. I cannot, I will not hear you. You shall not add falsehood to sin, deception to deception. I loved you dearer than my life; and rather than find you could thus betray yourself and me to dishonour, I would have seen you dead.—And you, young man, you who have so seduced my child from her obedience, what will you answer?"

"That she is innocent! that I am innocent!" replied Wilford.

"Do you deny, then," said Friar John, "that you held a meeting with her in Wellminster church?"

"I am not bound to answer you," replied Edward haughtily.

"Perhaps," said Morgan, "in pity to the feelings of this unhappy lady, we had better not proceed in this business in public. I would rather rest under the imputation she is disposed to charge upon me, than defend myself, by exposing what, for her sake, I would wish concealed."

"You are a villain!" exclaimed Edward Wilford.

"Silence!" said Southwell.

"Do not spare me, Sir Francis," cried Arabella; "tell all you know; tell to the world at large, the base, the unmanly means you took but this day to act upon my feelings, to win me to your purpose. You have cast aspersions upon me in public; you have accused your kinsman; and in public you shall prove these things."

"You shall, indeed," said Sir Richard: "I would gladly, could I have prevented my daughter's shame, have given my life to do it; but it shall never be said, that for any private motive, even to screen the reputation of my own child, I threw an obstacle in the way of justice. This young man has been accused in public; and every charge so brought against him shall be openly proved in the face of all the world."

"You are generous, Sir Richard," said Edward, "but you are deceived; and your very generosity of temper is made an instrument to assist the villany of others."

"Railing is no proof," observed Sir Richard; and, turning to his daughter, he added, "You admit, that you met Edward Wilford this day in the church of Wellminster?"

"Yes!" replied Arabella. "But, as God shall witness, not for the purpose Sir Francis Morgan would insinuate. I am innocent in this. Call upon Edward; he will acquit me."

"To be sure he will," said the Friar. "We have never yet suspected him of so much baseness to suppose that he would seduce you from the obedience you owe to your father, and then seek to cast the blame on you. He would not do so."

"Insidious man!" exclaimed Wilford; "you would destroy the only means that remains to me to clear this unhappy lady in the sight of her father and of the world.—Sir Richard! your daughter is guiltless! I wrote the letter that wrought upon her mind to induce her to meet me in the church, and for a cause of common humanity;—to entreat her, that she would implore you to shew some mercy to my poor sister, who is now lingering under the effects of a most cruel torture in a common prison. This was the cause. Sir Francis has told you much; but this part of the tale he has purposely suppressed."

"But he has not," said the Friar, "since he told it to me, who had the power to afford some relief to your sister. She is in prison under a charge of obstinate heresy. Had you only desired to find relief for her, it would have been to me, not to the Lady Arabella, you would have addressed yourself. But, you know, there was another motive."

"Yes!" replied Edward, "there was another motive. I wished to see her before I parted from her, perhaps for ever. I wished to gain from her a solemn promise, that were I living or dead, she would never cast herself away upon such a wretch as Morgan. This is truth."

"And it is enough," said Sir Richard,—"enough to prove all that has been deposed against you. And I do believe, that you did meditate to have stolen from me my child; else why, after such a meeting, if it were merely designed for the purpose you have stated—why should Arabella be found in your lodgings? You cannot answer this."

"I cannot, indeed," said Edward; "for her being there is a circumstance quite as surprising to me as it can be to yourself. But my knowledge of your daughter's character and worth assures me, however extraordinary it may appear, that no improper motive could be the cause."

"I can prove it," said Arabella; "and, by doing so, I must convict Morgan of villany of the deepest dye."

"Forbear that point, Lady Arabella," said Sir Francis, "or you may prove yourself a participator in the public crimes of which this man is accused.—Sir Richard! to save your

daughter's honour, nay, I will add, perhaps to save her life, I intercepted her in her flight to join Edward Wilford at Canterbury. I conjured her to be mine, lest she should fall under the double shame—that of stealing away from you, and in company with a traitor. I did more: I begged her, for her own sake, to consent to receive me, as you willed she should do, as her future husband; and, governed by my unbounded affection for her—call it a weakness if you will—I confess, I offered even to spare the guilty for her sake, so she would but consent. I shewed her the treasonable letters of this man; I offered to destroy them, so that I might but be assured she would not plunge herself into ruin, and cover your age with shame by becoming the wife of such a man. I did all that love, pity, and even a feeling of mercy for my guilty kinsman could suggest to me, to save both him and her; but in vain. She left me, threatening to make this act of kindness to herself and Edward Wilford my ruin with you."

"Good heaven!" exclaimed Arabella, "can falsehood thus be turned to bear the face of truth?"

"There is no falsehood; all is truth," said the Friar. "Morgan instantly sought me; he told me all. But when I heard that some matters had come forward in the examination of the persons suspected at Dover, to implicate Edward Wilford in this new scheme of rebellion with the Protestants; I, yes, I then insisted that Sir Francis should no longer conceal letters that would prove Edward's former guilt. I left Morgan, to take the host to a sick canon of the Cathedral. On my return with it, this old man insulted me in the streets, in his haste to aid Wilford in his flight; and even his own confession helps to prove all the charges brought against his master.—Bring that old man forward. Now let him speak."

Abel Allen was accordingly produced.

"What have you to say, old man," inquired Sir Richard, "for the offence committed by you this evening?"

"I answer," said Abel, "that I committed no offence at all; for, saving your Worship's presence, it was Pincher that did it, and not I."

"Who is Pincher?" inquired Sir Richard; "is he now present?"

"No, please your Worship," replied Abel Allen; "Pincher is too well-bred to come uncalled before his betters. And if it likes your Worship, he is my dog, and as trusty and as sensible a cur as ever wagged a tail; though, I grant, Pincher made a great mistake this evening, for I never bid him run off with

the top of the broken pyx. But as for where Pincher may be, I can't take upon me to say, seeing that he has not sent me word; and I really don't know all his haunts, though they mostly lie in the shambles, or among the vintners' boys. But if I did know them, I should be loth to give an account of them; for I am not the man to bring an old friend into trouble, and most specially as, in doing the offence, he thought he did no wrong."

"And what have you to say for yourself," said the Friar, "for this excuse affects only your dog?"

"Marry, an' it like you," replied Allen, "I would say for myself, what all men should say of another—the truth. I was in a great hurry, a-going to do Master Edward's bidding."

"And what was that?" inquired Sir Richard.

"Why, I went to get the horses ordered, that Master Edward was desirous to have in readiness, to set off on his journey, as soon as the friend he expected to go with him should arrive at his lodgings."

"You observe that, Sir Richard?" said Morgan.

"I do," replied Sir Richard: "and how many horses were you ordered to procure? and who was the friend your master expected to accompany him on this journey?"

"The horses were two in number," answered Allen; "but as to who the friend might be, I know no more than your Worship; for Master Edward did not tell me, so I can't say if it was man, woman, or child."

"How do all things prove the truth!" said Sir Richard; "even this man's own servant is the unconscious means of convicting him.—Edward Wilford, tell us who was that friend, who was to become the companion of your journey?"

"One," replied Edward, "who was a true friend, since he would have been such to me in my need. He would have risked even his own personal safety to serve me. And I cannot, and will not return such kindness, such generous intentions, by naming him in the presence of men so dangerous as are some here assembled."

Sir Richard looked dissatisfied, and shook his head.

"I fear," said Sir Francis Morgan, "that your friend is one from the land of Utopia, and that you cannot name him."

"And what is to be done with this old rascal?" inquired Sir John Baker, "and his thievish dog?"

"As for me," said Abel, "I protest that I am as innocent of offence to the Friar and the pyx, as the babe that is unborn. I was going back to Master Edward's lodgings, after I had

ordered the horses for his journey, when, look you, I turned down an alley, that brought me out suddenly just upon that part of the street where the Friar was going along, carrying the pyx under a canopy; and so, I had no time to think what I was doing; and I dashed under the canopy, meaning no offence, either to the Friar or to his box; and so I upset it, and it broke as it fell; and Pincher, not understanding what the shout meant, that was set up by the Friar and his people, did run off with the top of the broken pyx. For though Pincher is as faithful and as honest a dog as ever walked upon four legs, yet he is something given, now and then, to pilfering; that even I must say of him. And so I hope you will not deal hard with me, nor with Pincher neither; and if one of us must go to prison, why I am ready, for I would be loth to see the poor dog hanged by the neck like a cut-purse; for I'll take upon me to say, he meant no disrespect, and didn't know what he was doing; for had Thornton himself been there instead of the Friar, it had been all one to Pincher."

"It is a gross offence," said Sir John Baker; "an insult to the Holy Office. The thing must be farther considered; and till it is so, you must remain in ward.—Clerk, make out that old rascal's committal. Here will be a pretty posse for the gaol to-night!—Master Edward Wilford stands committed for high-treason."

"On what ground of accusation am I to make out the committal?" inquired Cluny: "on the charge of the late discoveries at Dover; or on the former one, respecting the letters to Sir Thomas Wyatt?"

"On both, on both grounds," replied Sir John; "then, clerk, you are sure to be right."

"And the principal evidence will be the letters, the testimony of Sir Francis Morgan, and that of the person or persons apprehended at Dover?" said Cluny.

"It will be painful to me," said Morgan, "to appear against so near a kinsman, especially as we stand connected in regard to certain properties. But I must not, from any private motive, shrink from a call of duty. The offence is of Wilford's own seeking; and whatever may be the consequence, his blood be upon his own head."

"No, his blood be upon thy head, Morgan," exclaimed old Gammer Plaise, as her voice, in a loud and emphatic manner, burst at once upon the ears of all assembled; "you will rise up and slay to glut your avarice. I know you, Morgan,—Edward Wilford stands between you and the broad lands and golden pieces of your uncle. I see all your drift and all your craft.

the top of the broken pyx. But as for where Pincher may be, I can't take upon me to say, seeing that he has not sent me word; and I really don't know all his haunts, though they mostly lie in the shambles, or among the vintners' boys. But if I did know them, I should be loth to give an account of them; for I am not the man to bring an old friend into trouble, and most specially as, in doing the offence, he thought he did no wrong."

"And what have you to say for yourself," said the Friar, "for this excuse affects only your dog?"

"Marry, an' it like you," replied Allen, "I would say for myself, what all men should say of another—the truth. I was in a great hurry, a-going to do Master Edward's bidding."

"And what was that?" inquired Sir Richard.

"Why, I went to get the horses ordered, that Master Edward was desirous to have in readiness, to set off on his journey, as soon as the friend he expected to go with him should arrive at his lodgings."

"You observe that, Sir Richard?" said Morgan.

"I do," replied Sir Richard: "and how many horses were you ordered to procure? and who was the friend your master expected to accompany him on this journey?"

"The horses were two in number," answered Allen; "but as to who the friend might be, I know no more than your Worship; for Master Edward did not tell me, so I can't say if it was man, woman, or child."

"How do all things prove the truth!" said Sir Richard; "even this man's own servant is the unconscious means of convicting him.—Edward Wilford, tell us who was that friend, who was to become the companion of your journey?"

"One," replied Edward, "who was a true friend, since he would have been such to me in my need. He would have risked even his own personal safety to serve me. And I cannot, and will not return such kindness, such generous intentions, by naming him in the presence of men so dangerous as are some here assembled."

Sir Richard looked dissatisfied, and shook his head.

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"I am guiltless," replied Edward, "of holding any treasonable purpose in once more revisiting my native land. But I know who are my enemies, and what they will do to make truth seem as falsehood, and falsehood as truth. I am prepared to meet my fate, since I know the worst. And who was ever yet spared, when it became necessary for the interests of Sir Francis Morgan and Friar John de Villa Garcina that they should be destroyed?—Farewell, Arabella!—Remember, for your own sake, the solemn promise you plighted to me but this morning, as we both stood before the tomb of your mother, whilst God saw our intents—and her spirit, perhaps, looked down with pity upon us."

"Oh, my father!" said Arabella, "he is innocent; indeed, he is! I beseech you," and she threw herself on her knees before him, and caught her father's hand,—"I beseech you to spare Edward Wilford; Morgan is a villain!"

"I cannot hear you," replied Sir Richard; "your conduct has lost all claim upon my confidence; and after such conduct, I must think your lips as false as your heart. Rise, Arabella; I command you, rise.—Sir John Baker, I shall thank you to see to the removal of the prisoner."

"I go," said Edward Wilford; "I will not stay to incense you, by my presence, against your unhappy daughter. I ask nothing for myself; but, ere I go, there is one thing that I must ask, even of you, Sir Richard. It is, to shew some pity to my poor sister! Rose has been inhumanly tortured. Harpsfield, like a savage and a monster as he is, has burnt and maimed her in the hand. In this state she has been cast into a prison; and unless you interpose by your authority to save her, she will perish from neglect, as her condition demands instant aid."

Sir Richard appeared greatly shocked; for, like Cardinal Pole, though a zealous Roman Catholic, he was a sincere contemner of making converts by cruelty; and it was said that this mildness of spirit had something lessened him in the favour of Mary. Still, he would not openly declare his sentiments, lest they should be mistaken for favouring the doctrine of the Reformation. He did not, therefore, make any comment upon the cruelty practised upon Rose; but he assured her brother that he would himself undertake to find her all the relief that might be necessary, and would endeavour to mitigate the severity of her fate.

"I thank you for this kindness to my poor Rose," said Wilford; "may God reward you for it! and greatly softened by the thoughts of his innocent and suffering sister, a tear

stole down the manly cheek of Edward as he spoke her name; and he continued: "May heaven preserve you, Arabella! and you, Sir Richard—may he prevent you from rushing upon the misery you meditate, in giving your daughter to one so wholly unworthy of her.—And for you, Sir Francis Morgan," he added, as he looked sternly upon his kinsman, "should I escape bonds and death, it shall be to do an act of justice upon you. You are eager to bathe your hands in my blood; but you are a wretch that I despise even more than I hate."

Wilford was carried off to Canterbury Castle, leaving Arabella almost fainting in her father's arms; and so great was the tumult and anxiety of her mind, that she was incapable of even attempting to remove those prejudices he had adopted against her. Sir Richard now gave his daughter into the care of Friar John, requesting him to see her conveyed home in safety to Wellminster Hall; as he said that he had himself some business to transact in Canterbury, which must be done ere that night was passed.

In a short time, Young Wilford, Gammer Plaise, blind Tommy, and Abel Allen, were all safely deposited in the public gaol of Canterbury, where for the present we must leave them.

A letter written by old Abel, two or three days after his imprisonment, and addressed to his sister, widow Littlewit, is still in existence, and it is a very curious specimen of epistolary composition. The following is a copy of this curious epistle, given in modern spelling, in which it will be seen, that, according to the manner of his time (adopted even by the learned and pious Bishop Hooper), old Abel Allen mixed up his ideas of religion and the interference of a Divine Providence, with the most common and familiar incidents of human life. To us it may seem extraordinary; but as it was the general practice of the time, with the good and the innocent, and it must have proceeded from a sincere, though mistaken, desire to do honour to God in whatsoever they did, in all seasons, and on all occasions.

"Good Sister Littlewit,

"It hath pleased the Lord that I should suffer, and be laid up in durance for mine offence, which was none of mine neither, inasmuch as Pincher had the greater hand in it. Nevertheless, I am well content therein, and exceedingly joyful that the poor dumb thing has got clear off from being hurt for the same: for certain Sir John Baker would have committed

him by a warrant, could he have laid hands upon him; for, as people say that Sir John never spares man, woman, or child, how should a dog look to find mercy from him? I am laid up, good sister, in a cold, damp, old, ancient hole under ground, that they call a dungeon, all of stone, with a slit in the wall for a window, with nothing but straw to rest my limbs upon. Pincher used to have a better bed than I have now; but what of that? mayhap he more deserved it. I have given my last groat to get a bit of paper, and a drop of ink to indite these lines to you, to bid you be of good cheer, and not to make your moan for me; for I see what the Lord is looking for—He would try me: and though the first day I came here I felt my heart very lumpish, and sad within me, and flesh and blood did strive hard against the spirit, yet, thanks be to God, I am better now! And both day and night I am as joyful as though I were under no cross at all. Yea, and I am as merry as I hope you will be in heaven, if ever you get there. And this morning, being taken up into fresh air in the court-yard of the gaol, I cut a frisk or twaine as jollily as ever I did in all my days. So, good sister, don't desert the truth, if the Lord should be for putting you on your trial. Don't recant, and turn to the Pope and the Romans, but cast all your care upon God—He will help the widow—He will look to your fatherless babe—He will preserve your goods—He will see that your lodgers pay their dues—He will keep the house; yea, rather than fail you, or it should lie undone, He will sweep the house, and rock the babe in its cradle. Cast, therefore, I say, all your care upon Him, for He will never forsake you so long as you don't forsake Him. Pray send me my red worsted night-cap, and the old townsman's gown that Master Wilford gave me, for I lack both in this cold damp dungeon. And if Pincher comes home, do keep him close shut up, for fear of Justice Baker. You had better keep him in the cellar, as the surest place.

"God bless you, good Sister Littlewit,
"(Kiss Poppet for me),
"So prays your loving brother,
"ABEL ALLEN.

"Don't forget to remember not to bung up the little barrel of ale that I brewed for you against Christmas; for if you do afore it has done working, it will burst the barrel by *fumigation*.

"These from my doleful prison in Canterbury Castle, this 1st day of November. Amen."

CHAPTER XX.

After having committed Arabella to the care of Friar John, with a strict charge that she should be confined within her own chamber, Sir Richard Southwell parted from his daughter in a state of mind truly pitiable. His affections clung as strongly as ever to his child; but convinced as he was, by the circumstances that had been brought to light, of the impropriety of her conduct, the artful turn given by Morgan to his interview with Arabella, supported by the cunning of the Friar, had so far succeeded in prejudicing the mind of her bigoted father, that he now remembered he was a father with a bitterness of soul which rendered life itself almost insupportable.

His affection for Arabella was not of that blinded nature which determines not to see the imperfections of a child. His love for his daughter had been founded on the highest esteem for her principles and character, and above all, for the artless and innocent temper of her mind. Now, therefore, to discover (as he firmly believed he had discovered) that she was guilty of the most refined falsehood and deceit, was a conviction so keenly painful, so overpowering, it came as a dagger to his heart. "She is lost, she is worthless," thought Sir Richard; "but even now I will not forsake her; I will try to rescue her from ruin. She may possibly repent hereafter, and then I may die in peace; but never, never can I taste of happiness again in this world, since my darling child has proved worthless. I will exert my authority to save her; I will consult Friar John as to the surest means. But now for the prison."

With these reflections Sir Richard endeavoured to compose his mind as he set forward on his way to Canterbury Castle, where he soon arrived without its gates. The sheriff of Kent could at all times command admission to any prisoner, and Sir Richard at once desired the keeper to shew him into the apartment where Rose Wilford was confined.

"She is in a dungeon of the east tower," said the man: "Archdeacon Harpsfield desired that she should be placed there; and we are so full of prisoners just now that I have been obliged to give her a companion; so that for this night I

have turned into her cell an old woman accused of witchcraft, thinking a heretic and a witch would make good company."

"Shew me the way thither," said Sir Richard, "and tell two or three of your men to be in readiness if I should happen to need them. I must speak with the head-keeper before I leave the prison."

The turnkey forthwith led Sir Richard through several dark and damp avenues, and down more than one flight of stone steps, ere they reached the cell of misery. As the man attempted to turn the key of the heavy iron lock, he found some difficulty; and in order to assist him, Sir Richard took the torch, that the man might have both hands free to do his office. The door was opened, and Sir Richard Southwell entered the dungeon, still bearing the flaming torch.

Sir Richard was a bigot, but not cruel; and though, whilst seated within his own closet and listening to the discourse of Friar John on the lawfulness and necessity of bringing back to the true church of Rome its wandering flock by any means, however violent, he had silently assented to such discourses, and had not felt any particular aversion to the means so recommended for conversion; yet now, when but a solitary instance of these cruelties was presented before his sight, he sickened with horror at the view. Forgetting all his bigotry in the warm feelings nature had planted so forcibly within his bosom, his first exclamation was one of the tenderest concern for the young, the innocent sufferer, whom he now beheld extended on a bed of straw, and enduring all the accumulated miseries of a dungeon and the effects of an inhuman torture.

The countenance of Rose was of a deadly whiteness; not the least appearance of blood seemed to remain even in her lips, they were as wan as her cheek, whilst her whole frame looked attenuated with suffering; yet her eye, though hollow and sunk in her head, retained an expression of mildness and benignity that formed a striking contrast to the circumstances which had placed her where she was. In the countenance of an aged woman, confined in the same cell, Sir Richard remarked that indignation was imprinted in strong characters upon every line of the hard features which composed it. He instantly recognised in this woman Gammer Plaise, who, at the moment he entered, appeared to have just concluded the charitable office of dressing the wound in the withered hand of Rose, with those remedies contained in the packet that Arabella had committed to the care of Tommy when she set out with him from Wellminster. This packet the acuteness

of Tommy had contrived to slip into his grandmother's hand, under her cloak, when the boy learnt that his granny was also to be sent to Canterbury gaol, as he thought she might possibly have an opportunity of seeing Mistress Rose, and of applying them to her relief. In this the goodness of heaven assisted the boy's hopes, and the old Gammer lost not a moment in doing the good deed.

Sir Richard dismissed the turnkey, and desired him to obey the orders he had given as they entered the cell. He now turned to Rose, and said to her in the kindest manner: "I came to afford you whatever aid it might be within my power to offer; I grieve to see you thus—my heart bleeds for you. For though we have not met for many a day, yet I remember you, Mistress Rose, when you were a child, and I loved you for the sweetness and the gentleness of your disposition. I then little thought where we should next meet."

"I thank you, Sir Richard," said Rose, with great mildness; "and though I cannot rise to receive you as I would do, yet I trust you will not hold me wanting in respect; for I know you to be a good man, and as such I honour you."

"You rise to receive me!" exclaimed Sir Richard: "poor girl, why you can scarcely support yourself against this cold and reeking wall. Good heaven! and upon straw too, and in your condition. Oh, what must be the heart that could reduce you to this pass!"

"I will tell you, Sir Richard," cried the old Gammer; "the heart that could inflict such torture on the poor little hand of this dear maiden, is one fit for murder and for fiends; nay, worse—for were he but in that place, for which he is so fitted, the common herd of the damned would shun his spirit. It would wander, solitary and alone, as the serpent did, when he glided through Paradise to tempt our first mother to sin, with nothing so accursed as himself. Harpsfield is a wretch, who pollutes the very ground on which he steps. He acts tortures, murders on the innocent, and, just Heaven! all under the pretended sanction of Thy name! Is this religion? Can this be truth? And can you, Sir Richard Southwell, look upon this innocent, as she now lies on a bed of straw, maimed and tortured by such a faith, and then credit its authority?"

"It is terrible; the sight is too much—too much to be endured," said Sir Richard. "Could I save this poor creature —could I but bring her into the right path, by the loss of my own life to do it, I would freely cast it down as a thing of naught. But I must not, I dare not scrutinise the mysterious

will of God. These sufferings may be necessary, though they seem dreadful. And remember, woman, the fearful doctrine even of your own people; that terrible decree of fate which Calvin teaches, by which, as he says, even babes and sucklings may be doomed to eternal misery for the glory of God."

"For the glory of the devil is such a doctrine!" exclaimed old Gammer Plaise vehemently; "that is not my faith; I know nothing of Calvin, or of his teaching. But I know the doctrine of God himself, in His revealed word, which teaches charity and mercy to all men."

"I will not argue a point of faith with you, woman," said Sir Richard; "you are ignorant and obstinate, though your act of charity to this poor sufferer makes me lament you are so. I came to visit the afflicted child of my once dear friend, to relieve her misery—to look to her wants—and, if it might be, to soften her obdurate spirit, to save her in soul and body."

"You are kind, sir," replied Rose, "very kind, and I hope that I am not ungrateful. But I will not deceive you. If the kindness you would extend to me must be given only in the hope to change my principles, it will prove unavailing."

"Do not say so," cried Sir Richard; "I have power to alleviate your present hard condition, and I will use it, whatever may be the consequence. But, unless you relent, I have no power to ward off the fate that must ultimately overtake you. Think what you have suffered, and let that move you."

"Never to deny my God," said Rose; "with my last breath will I honour truth. Look, Sir Richard," she continued, as she placed her left hand upon the arm that was bound up, resting in a kerchief tied about her neck; "look upon me! I have not yet seen eighteen years, and I have already been deprived of the use of this hand—it is lost to me for ever. Cast into a prison, whilst suffering agonies—without one human being near me, to give me but the aid which would have been extended even to a brute creature in such a case—my limbs weak and numbed with pain, so that in my dawn of life I already feel the misery of the decay of years; yet, with all this, here would I rest, till years and anguish end my day of trial, rather than I would consent to acknowledge with my tongue what my heart abhors."

"How excellent," said Sir Richard, "is such a noble constancy of mind! How deeply do I revere such sincerity as appears in you! Yet, when I think that virtues like yours are lost for ever, even to yourself, I shudder; for, however great virtue itself may be, it is hateful to God when it does not

acknowledge His truth here on earth. My heart bleeds for you; I would save you if I could; I would render that faith which you profess as perfect as your own ingenuous nature."

"Alas, alas!" replied Rose, "you sadly misconceive me. I am a sinful being like my fellows; and God, in His mercy, may make this trial necessary to purify my soul in this world, to render it fit for a better."

"If it be so," said Sir Richard, "then in that world you and I must never meet, since one of us must be in error."

"I hope otherwise," replied Rose; "I hope we may meet. That God may turn your heart, and that He may forgive all the persecutions of your Church against our afflicted people; for I would fain think that indeed you know not what you do."

"I cannot leave you in this opinion," said Sir Richard; "I feel so deep an interest in your fate, that, in spite of your self, I will try to save you. Think what a death may be yours, should you fall under the sentence of heresy."

"If I should," replied Rose, "I hope that heaven will give me strength to bear it, even as it did the burning taper that withered my hand as a shred of parchment in the fire. It is gone; and God, I trust, will again be strong in my weakness; if He demands my body at the stake, that body is the work of His own power, let Him do with it as He lists."

"He has formed it," said Sir Richard, "for the tenement of a mind so noble, that He will not suffer it to be cast away by the doctrines of the wicked."

"The doctrines I profess," answered Rose, "were taught me by my father. He is a good man, and I will never cast into his cup the bitterness of a child's disobedience."

"That is bitterness indeed!" exclaimed Southwell; and, greatly agitated by the remembrance of his daughter's supposed want of duty, he paced the cell in extreme distress of mind. Again he drew near Rose. "I came," continued Sir Richard, "to serve you. Do not let me leave you with the thought that my efforts are all vain. What can I do for you? I know not how it is, but you have inspired me with feelings of tenderness, of pity, even of reverence, that I never thought I could have felt for one of your mistaken faith. Let me serve you; and to do so will afford a comfort to my own mind that I have not known since these evil times began."

"You are kind indeed, Sir Richard," said Rose: "I would entreat you to use your influence with Thornton, the Suffragan of Dover, in behalf of my poor mother. I have not heard of her since I was brought hither two days ago. But when I

left her, she was lingering on the bed of sickness, perhaps of death."

"I will do so," replied Sir Richard: "I will see that she has every necessary succour, if I can so far influence Thornton to shew some indulgence to her."

"I thank you," said Rose. "May God reward you tenfold for this goodness! And do extend it, if you may, to my father. I am ignorant of his fate, since the hour in which he was dragged back to these walls, on refusing to sign his recantation. He is a very old man, and has not the strength that I have to endure hardships. I will be content to forego all your intended charity to me, so that my poor father might but have some share in your bounty."

"He shall, he shall," replied the kind-hearted Sir Richard, as he wrung the cold hand of Rose with a generous sympathy, whilst the tears that ran fast from his eyes dropped upon the hand he held within his own. Rose looked thankfully up in his face; and, struck by the humane expression which there appeared for her sufferings, she said to him mildly, "Forgive me if I say, that your heart is more charitable than your faith; and, though we differ in opinion, I cannot but think you are not far from being a good christian, as you are so good a man."

"And can you say this," exclaimed Sir Richard, "and at the very moment you are suffering from the severities that have been awarded to you by a member of my religion? What must be your feelings towards the man who could use you thus. Do you not hate him?"

"No!" answered Rose; "but I hate his sin, and I am sorry he has laid it upon his own soul; yet I forgive him, and may God do so too!"

"Good heaven!" exclaimed Sir Richard; "can such benignity dwell within the bosom of heresy? Can you lie there, in this condition, and look so calm, and speak thus mildly, and pardon the very man who has dealt with you in a manner that chills my blood within me when I but think upon it?"

"There is no merit," said Rose, "in forgiving the wrongs we suffer from our fellow-creatures, as God has made it the condition upon which we shall ourselves be forgiven. It is but a duty of self-interest to gain the inheritance of the promise."

"I must, I will save you," cried Sir Richard; "at least, I will attempt it. You are young, very young. You have a mind full of sense and feeling; you are not one of those who adopt a belief in any doctrine merely because your father has

done so before you. You will hear reason, and that may open your mind to conviction. You have not yet been examined at the Bishop of Dover's with other heretics. I will risk my own safety to attempt your conversion. I shall give orders to have you removed to my own house. Under my roof you shall receive every care; and though one member of your family has but lately meditated to injure me in the dearest point, you are wholly innocent of that offence, nor shall you suffer for the guilty. I shall go and give orders, for your careful removal, to the keeper of this prison."

On hearing Sir Richard declare his humane intentions towards Rose, old Gammer Plaise threw herself upon her knees before him, and fervently exclaimed—"May God Almighty bless you! You are like a blessed spirit sent from Him to throw abroad the doors of the prison to the innocent. I'll not believe that you are one of the Pope's religion, though you should swear it."

"There may be, I am convinced," said Rose, "merciful and good men even in that religion; my father taught me to believe as much, and that we are bound to do so in charity; yet there can be but one true faith, even the faith revealed to us by God himself in his Holy Word."

"I must leave you," said Sir Richard. "I will instantly order your removal."

"Do not," cried Rose—"do not, if you would remove me with a hope to work upon my mind to think as you do. I have embraced the Reformed faith on a conviction of its truth; and one chief point of it is, never to deceive our neighbour. Leave me here; but do not shew me mercy on the assumption of a hope that I can never suffer you to admit: I can never change."

"I will not hear you say so," replied Sir Richard; "I will do what I purpose. If I succeed, it will be the worthiest act of my life; if I fail—but I will hope I shall not. Would you wish to see your father before you quit the prison?"

"Would I wish to see my father!" repeated Rose; "there is no sight so dear to these eyes as the venerable countenance and the white hairs of my father's honoured age; but I must not be selfish. I would wish to see him, if I could give him comfort by the sight of me. The man who has brought me water to drink since I came here, told me that my father did not know of what had befallen me: I am thankful that he is ignorant of it, as it would but render his own sufferings more grievous, if he knew of mine. In this condition I should

shock his feelings; I long to receive his blessing, but I must forego even that comfort. I will not see him now."

"I shall return instantly," said Sir Richard; "you shall be removed in a litter to my house—in such a one as is used for the sick. I will order it to be prepared."

"Stay, Sir Richard," cried Rose; "this poor aged woman, for whose honesty and kindness I would answer with my life, is committed here, with her blind grandson, on a cruel charge. I would implore you to extend your mercy towards them."

"I fear I can do little for them," said Sir Richard, "as the woman has been arrested by the order of the Bishop of Dover. But what I can do, I will: she shall be better lodged than in this damp vault, and I will take care that she is allowed to see her grandson, though a heavy charge is brought against her."

"I thank you for that," said old Gammer Plaise; "for I have but one comfort, but one care in this world, and that is the poor boy; and if the thanks, the good wishes, and the prayers of an old woman like me could do you good, Sir Richard, I would pray for you whilst I have life and sense remaining—but more for your kindness to this poor maiden, than for all the pity you would shew to me and to my blind boy."

Sir Richard left the dungeon, and Rose took a kind and grateful leave of the poor woman, who had shewn so earnest a desire to be useful to her at the hour of her need. Mutually did they encourage each other to trust in God, and to bear every evil for His name's sake, in the sure and certain hope, that when this brief life should be no more, God would reward His faithful servants in His kingdom, where sorrow never comes, and where all that now seems dark and obscure shall be revealed in light and in truth.

In less than half an hour Sir Richard returned, attended by several persons, to assist in the removal of Rose. Her arrest had been the result of an exercise of mere tyranny on the part of Harpsfield; not even a warrant had been issued for her committal, consequently there was no obstacle in law to occasion her detention. She appeared to suffer great agony on first being raised from the ground, and her limbs were so stiffened and numbed that she could not stand. On passing through one of the passages, a turnkey, who was assisting in carrying her to the litter, pointed to a door, and told her in that chamber her father was confined.

On learning this, Rose implored the men to pause a moment.

She cast her eyes wistfully on the door, then raised them to heaven, and seemed to be engaged in mental prayer. She then motioned to the men to go on, and once more looked upon the door, but without a tear: yet it appeared that, even in this instance, the firmness of her mind had obtained a victory over her feelings, for she said to Sir Richard Southwell a little while after, as they passed forward with her, "Thank God, I did not disturb him with the sight of me; perhaps his mind was composed; he might be praying for me."

Rose was placed in the litter, and Sir Richard walked by her side, as it moved slowly forward from the Castle to Wellminster Hall. In thus causing her to be removed, Southwell had been governed by those strong feelings of commiseration, which the sight of her sufferings, and the patience with which she endured them, had excited in his breast. Whilst actually engaged in an act so benevolent, he had not thought of its consequences, or of the opinion of Friar John respecting this extraordinary kindness to a heretic. But Sir Richard, during his return home, had sufficient leisure and composure of mind to think upon these things, and he now put to himself the doubtful question with no small degree of anxiety, what would Friar John say, on learning the truth? And so contradictory is human conduct and human feelings, so much was the prejudiced mind of Southwell enslaved by the habits of submission to his Confessor, that, on arriving at his princely mansion, he actually ordered Rose, who was in the litter, to be carried round to a side-door, where he sneaked into his own house, more like a truant schoolboy than as its master, and cast a fearful glance around, lest he should be surprised by the Friar in the act of shewing his humane attentions to Rose Wilford.

Deborah was instantly summoned, and what with Sir Richard's desire to provide for the relief of Rose, and his ridiculous fears at encountering Friar John, he found no opportunity to upbraid his old housekeeper for her dereliction of duty, in suffering Arabella to stray, as she had done, beyond bounds during his absence. Weak men, though they may be loved for their virtues by their inferiors, are seldom respected by them; so was it with Sir Richard Southwell, for the same passive and yielding spirit that had allowed the Friar to become his master, was also the cause of the little comparative deference that was paid to him even by his own servants; many of whom, from motives of fear, were far more observant of the Friar than of Sir Richard himself; and Deborah, who certainly held his orders very little in consideration, in addition to his

usual indulgence, could add the claims of age, honesty, and long service, so that she frequently did not scruple to contradict him even before his face.

Deborah also was not without observation, and knew exactly how things stood between her master and the Friar; and now that her long cherished dislike for the Spanish priest was heightened by the sight of Rose in so deplorable a condition, she gave vent to her feelings by some very sharp, though indirect, allusions to Spanish cruelties being acted in England, from the admission of Spanish people into this country. And giving likewise a shrewd guess as to the motive of Sir Richard's return by the postern of his own house, she asked him, with almost an open expression of her sarcastic meaning, "If she should call Friar John, to bid him welcome home, as he had returned not long since, with her young lady, and had come in by the great door of the hall."

Sir Richard, whose conscience often condemned him for a too great submission to his ghostly confessor, felt some degree of shame from this peevish reproach of an old and indulged servant; and giving a strict charge that every care should be taken of Rose Wilford, and that she was to hold no communication with his daughter Arabella, he wished the unfortunate girl a good night, and hastened to be clear of Mistress Deborah.

Extremely nettled by the few words that had fallen from the lips of his housekeeper, Sir Richard now determined to sum up courage, and at once to be master in his own house: he would go direct to the apartment where he knew the Confessor was likely to be found; he would boldly say what he had done, and would allow of no comment upon it. With this purpose, he actually did reach the very threshold of the door, nay his hand was upon the latch. The weak are ever irresolute: some awkward and timid fears, in spite of his better judgment, still held him back; and he once more changed his mind, and retired with an uncomfortable and awkward feeling of indecision (the constant attendant of being desirous to do what we dare not do) to his own chamber; having come to no other resolve, than that he would leave his interview with the Friar, and his communication to him, as to the act of kindness he had done to Rose Wilford, to be brought about by chance, or by any accident that might lead to it.

Whilst Sir Richard remained thus wavering and crestfallen in his own house, a very different spirit was busy in the breast of Friar John. The domestic of that holy Father, a creature

entirely subservient to his purposes, had not lost a moment in informing him who it was Sir Richard had brought with him, and in what manner he had returned home. John instantly suspected the motive of so much caution. He knew well enough that the moment to gain a point for his own interest, or to exact an extraordinary concession from Sir Richard, was the one in which his timid superior was eager to make terms of peace, and to ward off an expected attack upon himself. In such a moment, the artful Friar knew that he should stand on the 'vantage ground; and that it needed but a little adroit management on his part, by keeping alive the fears and suspending the hopes of Sir Richard, completely to carry his point.

The Friar therefore instantly sought him; and acting upon his patron's mind, according to this system—in less than half an hour, what with the affectation of suppressed displeasure, feelings of attachment and regard for the honour of Sir Richard and his family; hints respecting the duties of sincerity, dictated by conscience, in reprehending his master's errors; many insidious arguments and sophistical counsels, the Friar so completely succeeded in his aim, that Sir Richard sat before him, like a man caught in a trap, with no power to move from the spot, till the springs which held him fast should be loosened by the hand that had set them; so entirely was the freedom of his mind enthralled by the artful ascendency of his Confessor.

As a great concession, the Friar, at last, gave a reluctant consent that Rose should be suffered to remain at the Hall, till she was in a condition once more to be removed with safety to herself: and, after granting this indulgence, the Friar turned the discourse, with so much cunning, upon Edward Wilford, and painted in such vivid colours the transactions of the day, that as he pictured them forth before the eyes of Sir Richard, Edward Wilford appeared in all the dark obscurity of an assassin, who lurks unseen to deal a fatal blow. He portrayed Arabella, on the other hand, as weak, deceitful, and misguided, on the very brink of a fatal gulf; where, to extend a band to save her from its abyss, would be but an act of common charity. Whilst Morgan he placed in the very foreground of the piece; where Sir Francis shone, all radiant with light and beneficence.

This picture, thus artfully painted by the Friar, so astonished, so distracted Sir Richard, so alarmed his fears as a father, that he started from his seat; and, in an agony of feeling, implored

the Friar to tell him in what manner he would have him act to save Arabella.

"Insist upon her compliance; carry her to the church, or to your own chapel; marry her at once to Morgan, and she is safe; else, rely upon it, and mark my words as prophetic, should Edward Wilford escape from the charges brought against him, she will become his wife. She will become a heretic, and is lost to you for ever in this world, and to herself in a better."

"But, I fear," replied Sir Richard—"I fear, she detests Morgan; that she will never consent to be his."

"She must, if you are firm," said Friar John.

"But her happiness," cried her anxious father; "think if I should be the means to render her for ever miserable in this life."

"If you hesitate, she will be miserable in a future life," answered the Confessor. "I leave you to determine between your child and your God."

"It is decided, then!" exclaimed Sir Richard. "Whatever may be the consequence, I will secure her happiness hereafter, and in doing so—"

"You act as a man—as a father," replied Friar John. "And believe me, Sir Richard, I know well the temper of women, and especially of the Lady Arabella. When once it is done—when Edward Wilford dares no longer influence her, she will return to her duty, and with it to her peace of mind. She will be thankful to us for having preserved her from the danger of being tempted to desert the true faith."

"She will, she will!" exclaimed Sir Richard, "I see it all. How can I ever thank you enough for teaching me how I ought to act to preserve my child?"

"There is only one thing I fear," said Friar John; "and as you see the force and the truth of my arguments—as you consent to follow my advice, I would also conjure you to be ruled by me on one point in particular."

"I will do anything—I will consent to whatever you may direct," replied Sir Richard; "tell me what it is?"

"You must not see your child till the moment you are about to lead her to the altar," said the Friar.

Sir Richard looked surprised, and grieved to the very soul. "Why should this be so?" he replied. "Surely I might persuade her—I might induce her to hear reason. I might overcome—"

"No," said the Friar; "she would overcome you. I fear nothing but her meetings with you. You have not firmness

sufficient to resist her tears. A few watery drops in her eyes will wash out all the record of the past. You will be undone. You will not dare to save her from perdition. You must *not* see her."

"Well then, I will not see her," replied Sir Richard. "I promise that till the hour arrives in which I am to lead her to the church, I will not see her."

"Nay, but you must swear that you will not," said the Friar. "I cannot trust even your promise, where the feelings of a father might interpose to render it void. Swear upon the cross;" and the Friar took up that which hung from his girdle.

Sir Richard looked for a moment at his Confessor, and then devoutly kissed the cross; whilst with an air of the deepest sorrow he said, "I do swear to follow your injunctions; by this blessed emblem, I swear it."

"Give up your daughter to my rule," continued the Friar; "till the hour comes to transfer that rule to one who, I doubt not, will make her a dear husband. Then shall she have my blessing as I resign her once more to your care."

"But you will be kind to her," said Sir Richard. "You will lead her mind to fulfil her duty in this instance by gentle arguments, by persuasive means, by a sense of what she owes to God, to herself, and to me."

"I mean to do so," replied Friar John. "Do you think that I would injure the happiness of the Lady Arabella, when, in taking upon me this part, I do violence to my own feelings in the hope to save her? Farewell; I will see you to-morrow, and we will then hold further conference on what must be done."

"I will attend you," said Sir Richard with much gravity.

"And remember all I have enjoined," continued the Friar.

"I will obey you," answered Sir Richard with a deep sigh; and sinking into a chair he rested his head upon his hand, and seemed lost in a deep and melancholy train of reflections. The Friar left him to himself, and retired for the night.

CHAPTER XXI

THE day upon which Owen Wilford was to take his trial before the Commissioners at length arrived. Every thing had been prepared for the occasion in a manner to render it at once solemn and imposing. The Spiritual Court was to be held in the Chapel of the Holy Trinity, in the cathedral of Canterbury, on account of the Chief Commissioner acting under the authority of Cardinal Pole, whose person he was to represent, not only as Primate of all England, but as Legate *à latere* from the Pope.

Whoever has visited the Chapel of the Holy Trinity at Canterbury cannot but remember the extraordinary beauty of its architecture, which presents, in its combinations of Gothic columns, superincumbent arches, carved capitals, and windows sparkling with the brilliancy of the deep and rich hues of their stained glass, the most striking effects; the whole being characteristic at once of stability, solemnity, and magnificence.

And here too the mind, amidst that sense of devotional veneration such a scene cannot fail to excite, turns with a moral, as well as national, feeling, to dwell for a moment upon the memory of the mighty dead. It contemplates the spot where their ashes have reposed in unbroken silence during so many ages, whilst the acts or glories of their lives stirred the emulation even of empires. This last thought naturally contrasts itself with their present nothingness; so that it is with a mingled sense of admiration and humility that we now think upon the deeds of Edward, the hero of Poictiers and Cressy, as we behold the trophied monument and the brazen effigy consecrated to his fame. And a sigh escapes us for the vanity of human glory, when we pause to view the magnificent tomb and sculptured figures of Henry the Fourth, king of England, and of his beauteous queen, Joan of Navarre.

In this chapel also the bones of St. Thomas à Becket had been enshrined: and though, during the reign of Henry the Eighth, the gorgeous shrine which contained them was pillaged, whilst the bones were committed to the flames, yet, in Mary's days, a small altar, dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury, was again erected in a side part of the same chapel, where the

devotees attached to the memory of this old and favoured saint, once more set up their lighted tapers to his memory. Many other lateral altars stood likewise in this chapel, which were richly adorned with splendid images, paintings, and offerings even of gold and jewels; but the chief altar stood at the east end, immediately before that part of the chapel which gives entrance from the circular aisle to the beautiful little building called Becket's Crown. This chief altar was dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

On the occasion of holding the Spiritual Court, a temporary platform was erected in front of it, about ten feet in height, so that the Commissioner who was to represent the Pope's person might sit under the sacrament of the high altar of the Trinity. Various seats were arranged below and about this platform, and a table was placed to accommodate the officers of the law, and the scriveners, who were to take down the process in writing.

At an early hour the Commissioners assembled. Those of the Church were attired in the sacred habits of their functions, wearing upon this occasion the same costly albes, copes, etc. that they were used to wear on days of the highest ceremonials in the calendar. The law officers were likewise in their respective robes of office. Amongst the latter was Sir Richard Southwell, who attended the meeting in the capacity of high sheriff for the county of Kent. Sir John Baker, already known to the reader as a civil magistrate, also acting under the Special Commission, attended, in company with the Mayor of the city and several of the aldermen and chief burgesses of Canterbury. Two doctors of the civil law took their seats before the table; the one as the Queen's, and the other as the King's proctor. Thomas Cluny, attorney-at-law, was also seated as chief clerk, or notary, of the ordinance.

These having taken their respective stations, now stood up in readiness to receive the head of the Commission. In a few minutes, Thornton, Suffragan Bishop of Dover (and next in the diocese to the Archbishop himself), entered the chapel with great pomp and attendance; for, on this occasion, as the deputy of the Legate, who represented the Pope in England, Thornton appeared as the Pontiff of Rome. His cross-bearer marched before him, bearing a high triple cross of silver, attended by two priests—the one bearing a silver pillar upon a cushion of red velvet; and the other, two gold keys, as the emblem of the charge of St. Peter.

Several children holding lighted tapers next approached, and immediately after walked Thornton, attired *in pontifical-*

ibus, glittering with splendid ornaments, the long train of his cope upheld by a priest; whilst Friar John de Villa Garcina, and Harpsfield, archdeacon of Canterbury, walked the one on his right, and the other on his left hand, and with much ceremony attended him to the chair, or throne, that was raised before the altar. As the Suffragan Bishop approached, every one rose up; nor did they presume to move from the attitude of silent respect in which they stood till the delegate of the Pope's delegate had taken his seat. Harpsfield and Friar John also took their seats on each side of the throne.

The prisoner, it was known, was ready, and held apart till it should be the pleasure of the Court to order him before it. Some preliminaries being settled, the order was given, and the footsteps of people were soon heard advancing up the lengthened aisles of the cathedral, whilst their halberts and bills were seen here and there to glitter between the columns as they caught the light in passing on, and presently after Owen Wilford stood just within the entrance of the chapel.

The criar of the court arose, and said in a loud and distinct voice, "Owen Wilford, sometime clerk of Wellminster in the county of Kent, come into the Court, there to make such answer as you may to that with which you are charged withal."

Owen immediately obeyed the summons, and with a steady step, a dignified and raised mien, his countenance neither joyful nor sad, but full of gravity and reverence, he advanced towards the assembly, and stopped within a few paces of the table, immediately facing his judges. He now cast a quick glance about him, when, on seeing the King and Queen's proctors, he respectfully doffed the black silk cap that he wore upon his head, and made obeisance, first to the one, and then to the other, on his bended knee, and, rising up, looked Thornton full in the face, and covered his head again.

A murmur ran through the court; and Sir John Baker, who sat near where he stood, said to him, "What! man, will you not doff your cap to the Suffragan Bishop of Dover, when he sits there to represent the Pope?"

"I acknowledge no such authority in England," replied Owen calmly.

The Bishop of Dover now spoke: "Though, inasmuch as it respects my own person," said he, "I demand from you, Owen Wilford, neither deference nor respect; yet, when it is considered that I sit here as the deputy of Cardinal Pole, the Legate of Rome, in the name of that authority I do demand it. Cardinal Pole, besides his holy commission from the head

of the Universal Church on earth, is also one of great and high qualities, in whose veins the royal blood of kings flows right nobly, being, as you well wot of, descended from Edward the Fourth, sometime sovereign of these realms."

"God forbid," said Owen, "that a mean man, like myself, should seem to be wanting in that respect which I acknowledge to be most justly due to the Cardinal Pole—due to him as a man of great learning, excellent parts, and many virtues; due to him for the princely blood whereof he is descended—and especially due to him as Primate of all England. To him therefore, in these qualities, I pay my obeisance;" and Wilford took off his cap, and held it in his hand as he spoke, and meekly bowed his head upon his bosom. He then continued, as he replaced his cap upon his head: "But to the same Cardinal Pole, as Legate from the See of Rome in these realms, I make no such reverence, since I never did, and never will, acknowledge such authority as lawful."

"You will not take off your cap then to the Legate?" said Thornton.

"I will not," replied Owen Wilford firmly.

"Then some one must do it for you," said Thornton.

Sir John Baker heard this, and getting up as fast as his unwieldy bulk would let him, he waddled to the side of Owen Wilford, and knocked the cap off his head. One standing by snatched it up, and Owen remained bareheaded, without taking the least notice of the circumstance.

Thornton proceeded: "Master Wilford," said he, "you shall understand that I and many of these honourable persons here assembled, having received a special commission from the aforesaid Cardinal Pole, as Legate *à latere*, to proceed against, examine, and chastise, all members of the Church suspected of heresy, and also a more general commission from the Queen and Council, with the broad seal of England affixed thereto, we have and do possess full power for that which we are now about to do, to examine you on certain points articulated against you, under the law of the Spiritual Court, as shall presently appear. Clerk, read the commission."

Cluny arose, and did so. This Commission was much of the same nature as others of the period, in which a most unlimited authority was afforded to the meaner instruments of arbitrary power to assist the cruel tyranny of their superiors. Under a similar commission, those glorious martyrs of the Protestant cause—Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Bradford, and others, had already perished.

When Cluny had finished reading, Thornton asked Wilford if he had any objections to offer on the ground of their authority.

"I have but one," replied Owen, "and that includes all the rest; since I deny that you can have any authority which builds itself on the See of Rome."

"That objection cannot be admitted," said Thornton, "as all Christendom allows his Holiness, the Bishop of Rome, to be supreme Head of the Universal Church. Clerk, proceed, rehearse the indictment."

The indictment was of considerable length. It set forth, in a long and tedious preamble, a variety of charges, both in general and specific terms, against Owen Wilford, and chiefly for the crimes of blasphemy and heresy; a turning of God's word into a vile abuse; and leading astray, and into everlasting damnation, many of her Majesty's liege subjects of her realm of England. The preamble concluded with these words: "You, Owen Wilford, are now called to answer for the same; and as you shall make your innocence or your guilt appear therein, may God give you a good deliverance, or a just condemnation!"

Thornton now addressed the prisoner. "You have had, Master Wilford, rehearsed to you, both the commission of our authority, and the heavy charges whereof you are accused; and though, from the power of the one, and the offensiveness of the other, we might instantly proceed against you according to the articles, yet, remembering the great duty of charity which is laid upon the conscience of all men, and especially of those that stand in the place of God's vicar here on earth, we, being moved by the same, would first desire earnestly to exhort you to return to the true path,—to reconcile yourself to that universal Church, from which you are now become as a stray sheep from the fold—as one whom the wolf watcheth to devour; to persuade you to make yourself fitting to receive the Queen's great mercy, which most gladly she will extend to you,—to conjure you to render yourself back to us, your sorrowing brothers for those your great iniquities, that we may rejoice over you, even as the father rejoiced for the return of his prodigal son. Do this, and we will rise up and rejoice, and kill the fatted calf, and make merry with you after our heart's desire, seeing that he which was lost is now found, and cometh back to the obedience of the Pope and the Queen; and, in order to further this most charitable purpose, I shall somewhat discourse to you at large in this oration, trusting that

you will not take my talk as vain talk, but for the good of your soul. I shall divide my discourse into three parts, after the solemn custom of the schools—reminding you, in my first division, whence you have fallen; secondly, of the vanity of those letts and hindrances which may keep you from your turning; thirdly, and lastly, on the nature of your danger if you still stand stiff-necked, and blind as the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears. Shall I say on?"

"May I have leave to speak anon, in answer, if I hear you?" inquired Owen Wilford.

"You shall have leave to speak all your heart, Master Wilford," replied Thornton; "since, following the gracious designs of our most godly, meek, and excellent Queen; and furthermore being desirous to step after the steps of that most zealous, tender, and charitable prelate, Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London, we will gladly hear all you say, that we may do as they do, shewing nothing but justice tempered with charity, mercy, and patience. And now, Master Wilford, to touch upon the first head of my discourse, let me say unto you, remember from whence thou art fallen—from the Universal Church, and that by open heresy. You have fallen from your faith and your very oath of allegiance, and that by abominable preachings, marriage, and adultery. You have fallen from your Sovereign Princes, the King's and Queen's Majesties, by a non-compliance with their wills, whereby you are in some sort guilty of open treason. And most chiefest and greatest of all, you have fallen from him, whose most sacred, holy, supreme, and immaculate person and office I do now represent in my own unworthy person—unworthy in respect to myself; but most worthy as representing the worthiest—the worthiest in the sight of heaven, in the sight of all the saints, his Holiness the Pope. And now I come to the second part of my discourse, having something abridged the first, lest I should seem wearisome; though, did we sinful men but feel as saints and angels do, we should never tire nor weary in hearing of the greatness and the excellence of his Holiness the Pope. Mayhap you will make answer that you have not fallen away from the Catholic Church that the Pope is the head of, since you may say there is another Church. But, as touching that, I make answer unto you that, if you say, so, you are as the Donatists were, who said there was no true Church but in Africa; and as you would say, so did Novatus. But hear what says St. Cyprian, in his argument for Cornelius against Novatus: '*Ecclesia una est, quæ cum sit una, intus et foris esse*

non potest.' Mayhap you will advise that you do not fall by heresy: so said the Arians, and so did the Marcians, going about by a twisting and a turning of Scripture to make the true seem the false, and the false seem the true. Peradventure you will deny that you have fallen by apostasy, by the breaking or beating down of your oath: so did Vigilantius, in so great wise, that he, forsooth, would have no one called to the ministry but those who had their wives laden with children. O what shameful and abominable fallings are these! Mayhap you will say you have not introduced new doctrines, but rather have cleared up the old: so said Berengarius before his turning back again; so said Luther when he opened his throat like a bull of Basan, to bellow out heresies throughout the world; so said Zuinglius; so said Melancthon; so said Carolostadius; so said Œcolampadius; so said Calvin and Knox; so said Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and all the heretics that ever yet babbled upon earth. Mayhap you will say that you have gone too far to turn. But to this I answer, that the shame thereof shall be no shame at all, seeing those in whose eyes your turning should seem shame, are shamed themselves beyond all that is shameful by their open, wicked, and abominable heresies. And if you should want ensamples to encourage your turning, you shall find very many in Holy Writ. Did not David turn, after Nathan thundered in his ears that most striking warning of his conscience, saying unto him, 'Thou art the man?' And even as Nathan said unto David, so say I unto you. Speak of a heretic, I say, 'Thou art the man!' Tell of a foul liver; again I say, 'Thou art the man;' Talk of a blasphemer; lo! I cry, 'Thou art the man!' And yet again I cry, Turn you, turn you, and save your soul alive. David did turn. Did not Paul turn, after he had gone about to slay God's people? Did not St. Cyprian turn when afore he was a wizard? Did not St. Augustine turn, after he had been out of the Church nine years? Did not Berengarius turn?—yea, and repented, to make his turning good and sound. And in our days did not Cranmer turn?—though I grieve and shame to say it, that he did turn back again to evil. And after such examples, shall *you* shame to turn? Yea, I say unto you shame not at all; for in this your shame shall be glory, as your glory afore was your shame. And now I come to the third and last part of this my solemn discourse, which toucheth the bodily danger wherein you do now stand. Mayhap if you die for your stiff-necked and obstinate opinions you will say that you die a martyr. But I say you shall be

no martyr at all—seeing that it is the cause of a man's death, and not the manner of it, that maketh the martyr. Even in the old and heathen world they did so; as I may tell you did Regulus; as I may tell you did Scipio Tettus, who, whilst burning for setting up a school of atheism, rejoiced and clapped his hands in the midst of the flames. Thus falsehood itself will pretend to be a martyr. And of many others could I tell you, even in the heathen times, which you well wot of, being, as you are, a man of much learning and of the schools. But if you die for these opinions, you shall but become as a foul sacrifice before God; and both your body and your soul shall help but as the coals of the pit to fill up that pit to burn for ever. And so you are no martyr at all. Turn you; once more I exhort you to turn you. Let not vain-glory set you up; but let humility cast you down. Yield; humble you; submit yourself unto the Church; and then shall the Church submit herself to you. Yea, we your brothers shall rejoice, and the Queen's Highness, and the King's Grace, and the Pope's Holiness, and all the priests and the bishops, shall rise up and rejoice, and sing, and make them glad, seeing that which was lost is now found, and is their own again, and for ever. Amen."

Here the Suffragan Bishop of Dover stopped something out of breath, and, having ended his oration, he sat down, whilst Friar John rose up and opened his discourse. But we really have some mercy upon the reader, and shall not therefore impose upon him the task of perusing Friar John's sermon, which was divided into ten solemn parts, instead of three. We thought it right, however, to give Thornton's address at full length, as a specimen of those learned, eloquent, and long-winded speeches so frequently addressed to the unhappy and persecuted Protestants, before their examination, in the hope to procure a recantation of their opinions.

The Friar ended: and Nicholas Harpsfield, the Archdeacon, arose, and took up his discourse, which lasted a full hour and a half. He concluded in these words: "Having shewn you, Master Wilford, in my discourse, the greatness and enormity of your offences, I shall now proceed to shew you how lawful and fitting it is, such offences should receive their reward. The Church of Rome doth now hold over you the rule spiritual; the laws of this realm do hold over you the rule temporal. Thus these two work together for the glory of heaven and the written Word: for in all ages we find that it was so: so was it in the days of Josias and Hezekiah; so was

it with the King of Nineveh, when he did compel his people to keep the fast that was ordained for the glory of God; so was it with Nebuchadnezzar, when he did enact his laws against the wicked blasphemers of the true God; so did Constantine, by the powers secular, assist the powers spiritual, when he rose up to put down the Arians; and so did Theodosius against the Nestorians.—And now come we to greater matters. Did not Moses command the children of Levi to slay the idolaters; and did not they smite three thousand men, shewing thereby that it is lawful and just to take away life for the glory of God? Yea, did not God himself destroy those raging cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sins? Yea, did He not send the flood to wash off from the face of the earth all His outrageous, wicked, and rebellious people at once, saving only the godly Noah in the ark, with seven souls more? And even as the God of heaven and of earth, in the old times, did cleanse at once this world of its iniquity by water, even so now doth his Vicar here on earth rise up to cleanse the same by fire; for, he in his great holiness, and in his high place, shall come forth for justice. And I say unto you, that not only in the Old Testament, but even in the New, there shall be found warrant for these things. For, look you to the parable of the Supper, when those that were bidden would not come in, did not the command go forth to the servants of the lord of the supper, that they should gather them people from the city, and from the highways, and compel them to come in? And how compel them, think you?—even as the lord of that supper pleased. And our lord on earth, his Holiness of Rome, pleased to compel men to come in even by the sword and by fire. And who shall say him nay, seeing he hath the authority from God himself, being the binder and looser of all things here on earth, or, as I may say, the very ladder of holiness, which, like the ladder of Jacob, reacheth up to heaven? And seeing that it is so, I do exhort and beseech you to come into his flock; but if you lack to do so, and still hold out, then most justly and righteously, and charitably, shall your body be given to be burnt, and your soul to destruction. Amen."

Here the Archdeacon ended, and sat down. Owen Wilford remained silent for a moment, and seeing that no one again rose up to speak, he looked at Thornton, and said, "Shall I now have leave to make answer?"

"Yea, Master Wilford," replied the Suffragan, "you shall have leave to say your mind, and that freely; since, if you declare an honest mind, we shall gladly hear you."

"I am an old man," continued Wilford. "I have long been cast into a prison, where I have suffered, Heaven knoweth, full many a hard condition; and of late I have been suffered to lie in a dungeon, with no company but that of God and my own thoughts. I have been denied my books, even my Bible was taken from me; so that being old, feeble by the natural decay of years, sick in body from my sad necessity, and something amazed in mind by the sense of my afflictions, I am not come here now at all prepared to answer the great learning which appears in those discourses you have addressed to me this day. I fear, therefore, that I shall seem but as a weak old man, who can but ill do the service of his Master, when I take upon me to reply to your orations; and in nothing can I hope to match that flow of eloquence which has been exercised against me. Thus much for my apology. But what I can do I will, and that for the Truth's sake, well remembering that the foolish things of this world are sometimes made to confound the wise. I begin then my discourse with once more avowing that, so long as I have breath, I never will admit the authority of the See of Rome as lawful in these realms."

"Clerk, make a note of that," said Thornton.

"And I now proceed," continued Wilford, "to shew on what grounds I refuse the same. Is not Master Doctor there, that sitteth on the right-hand, the Queen's Proctor?"

"You speak a verity," answered Thornton.

"And is not the other Master Doctor, that sitteth on the left-hand, the King's Proctor?"

"He is," replied Thornton.

"Then," said Wilford, "whilst these learned doctors of the civil law sit there to represent in this land of England the persons and the authorities of the rulers of the land, it is to them I must make answer, if against them I have offended, and not before a foreign power. And even by the laws of this kingdom, though I confess that I am nothing skilful in the civil law, yet will I shew that I cannot acknowledge that foreign power, without the commission of an act of treason. Mary, queen of England, in that august ceremony whereby she became wedded to this land, in the solemn oath of her espousals, did swear upon the altar of God, and in the sight of all her people, to observe the laws and liberties of England; and we her people (I being one among the meanest of them) are by our oath of allegiance bound to respect the same. Now, one chief law of this land is, that the King or Queen of England is supreme ruler of their dominions, and that the crown

sits upon the sovereign's head, by the laws, and the descent of kings, and from no other power, save that of God. And there is another law made to uphold this, which is, that whosoever shall offer lett or hindrance to the observance of the first law (or acknowledge any foreign power in England, either spiritual or temporal), shall be in danger of a Premunire. How then, I ask, can I, or any other subject of this realm, receive and consent to the See of Rome, without being guilty of perjury, and falling within the danger of the Premunire?—I would beseech you to answer this."

Here the Queen's Proctor took up the matter, and said: "But you well wot, Master Wilford, that when her Majesty took the oath of her coronation, she also took another oath to his Holiness the Pontiff of Rome, in the which she did make a solemn vow to maintain the See of Rome."

"That her Majesty did so, I grieve to think upon," replied Wilford; "but that last vow must be invalid, inasmuch as it was a manifest contradiction to her coronation oath; and though a Sovereign lady be guilty of perjury, I see not how it can follow that a subject ought to do the like, or may therefore be excused from his obedience to the laws of the land."

"The Queen perjured! her Grace guilty of perjury!" was now the murmur that ran through the court.

"I say not that she is perjured," replied Wilford. "But this I say, if she abides by her oath unto the Pope, to the injury of her oath of coronation, she becomes perjured to her people."

"You cannot make that appear, with all your foul-mouthed railing," said Thornton.

"That will I now shew," answered Wilford; "and in doing so, I shall put this assembly in remembrance of what they did know of as well as I did. There is no one here present but must recollect, that when the Protestant men of Suffolk and of Norfolk rose up loyally and zealously to place Queen Mary on the thone, after the attempt that was made to give the crown to the Lady Jane Gray, they first demanded of the Princess Mary that, during her reign, she would molest no man for the sake of conscience; and that the laws and the religion of this land should be suffered to remain unaltered, as they were established during the sovereignty of her brother Edward the Sixth; and she did solemnly vow, on the word of a Queen, that if these Suffolk men restored her to her right, she would sacredly observe this demand they made upon her for the freedom of their conscience.—Can any one here present deny the same?"

"Our gracious Queen," replied Thornton, "did not make that oath upon any sacrament of the altar; and even had she done so, seeing that it would have been made to heretics, she was not bound to observe the same. An absolution from his Holiness might have cleared her from a vow she could not make without his authority. Since his Holiness being once more declared supreme Head of the Church of England, all affairs touching the conscience of her Majesty and of her subjects become his: the Queen can no longer act contrary to his pleasure."

"Then, by the matter of your argument," answered Wilford, "an oath is no oath at all; and even her Grace's coronation oath is nothing, if it may be dispensed with at the pleasure of the Pope; since at her coronation her Majesty swore to uphold the laws and liberties of this country, as they stood in the time of King Edward the Sixth. These we all know to be contrary to the Pope's pleasure, inasmuch as they maintain the Reformed faith—the only sure foundation of civil as well as spiritual liberty."

"Rather say of licence to do evil," said Thornton.

"And farther I would urge," continued Wilford, "that with the constitution of the laws of this realm the assumption of the See of Rome cannot stand good. For, look you, the law of England is, that the King or Queen is such by no foreign power; and the Pope says, that all sovereign rulers hold the sceptre from him, he having authority to raise up or to put down their rule."

"Marry," cried Harpsfield, "I thought that we came here to have to debate with a divinity priest; but, lo! he turns out to be a notable lawyer, and talks more like a bencher than a minister.—We came to examine you, Master Wilford, in spiritual matters, and not to hear you talk about the law."

"But I would shew," replied Wilford with spirit, "that no law exists on which you can ground an authority to try me, seeing that your commission is under the Cardinal as Legate *à latere*. If I prove the Pope has no authority in England, it follows that his Legate can have none. You say that I am to be examined in spiritual matters as a priest. Now, the law of England is, that all priests offending against the laws, either spiritual or temporal, are to be tried after the laws of the realm. But the See of Rome declares that no secular power can judge in matters spiritual.—How make you these two things agree?"

A confusion of voices was now heard, and all spoke and

railed together in the same disorderly manner as they had often done before at Oxford, to confound, rather than to answer the arguments of their opponents. "The Queen, all the land, have again acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope: the Parliament has revived the statute against heresy; the proclamation of the Queen and Council is our warrant," and many other such-like sentences were uttered, but no positive reply.

When Wilford could again be heard, he continued: "The law of England is, that whosoever shall consent to a foreign power, to the injury of the constitutional laws and ordinances of this country, are to be held guilty of treason, and subject to Premunire. The Pope says, that whosoever, in any country, England or elsewhere, hindereth the sway of his laws, shall be accursed, the sovereign accursed, the counsel accursed, and all the people accursed. Why, what falsehood, what contradiction, is there here!—and who that is born in England can receive the Pope, without lending his aid to destroy the ancient laws and liberties of his country? I will never be a traitor to the land that gave me birth."

"Hear no more of this babbling talk about laws, I beseech you," said Harpsfield to Thornton: "the Pope is the Pope, and the Queen is the Queen, and that is enough for us to know about the matter, seeing we have the authority of both. We come not here to listen to pleadings of law; we come to do our duty; and it seemeth as if this fellow came to examine us, and not we to examine him. Let us on to the business. The Queen and the King, as pertaining to themselves, because of the law (if this man will have about the law), cannot here personally appear, *Quia sunt illustrissimæ personæ;* they have therefore here sent their proctors, over whom the Bishop of Dover hath authority, being the delegate of the Pope's Legate *à latere:* proceed, therefore, to the matter; and let Master Wilford, if he must talk, say his mind as to the articles brought against him, and not go wandering thus up and down clean from the matter."

"You will not admit my appeal then," said Wilford, "as to the illegality of your commission?"

"We will hear no more of that matter," said Thornton; "we have heard too much already; we do but lose time: finish your talk, and then we proceed to the examination."

"I go, then, to the charges brought against me," replied Wilford. "First, I am accused of heresy: this, I utterly deny; having set forth my opinions some years ago, even in Cranmer's time, in a little book you well wot of, 'The Touchstone of Truth, or the Gospel credited before Traditions.'"

"I know it," said Thornton; "a copy of it was burned by the hangman at Paul's Cross, with much other vile matter, since you have been in prison."

"That book," continued Wilford, "will prove that I am no heretic. But if you will say, that my refusal to consent to the Pope is heresy; then, I say, that all the Fathers of the Primitive Church, yea, the Apostles themselves, taught heresy; since the vain-glorious and arrogant assumption of the Pope is in direct opposition to the tenets of the Gospel; nay, more, for if you will admit that by its fruits a tree shall be known, be it a good or a bad tree; even so say I, that by its works the See of Rome shall be known for the very Antichrist!"

Here a great murmur ran through the Court. At length Wilford was suffered to continue: "I have been denied my books," said he, "and, being an old man, my memory is something infirm; but I will shew you certain passages in the Revelation of St. John, touching the Antichrist; 'And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet-colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications; and upon her forehead was written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Earth. And I saw a woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs.' And again, the same prophet says, when speaking of the kings of the earth, 'These have one mind, and shall give their power and their strength unto the Beast.' Now let any man consider these and the like prophecies, and then say if they do not point with the finger of God himself to the pride and the assumption of the See of Rome. Doth not the Pope adorn himself in purple, and in scarlet, and precious stones? And who sitteth but he on the Seven Hills, to put his foot on the necks of kings and princes, declaring that to be verified in him, which was only spoken of the Son of God, *Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis, et conculcabis leonem et draconem?* And doth not he, in his pride, which is more daring than that of Lucifer, take to himself the highest place on earth, casting down kings and emperors at his foot? Doth not he declare that he holds the place of God himself, ruling and judging even the consciences of men, holding possession of the same, and avowing sins to be everlastingly forgiven or retained, even as *he* listeth? He hath brought in idols, and false gods, making the Virgin to be

worshipped as God; yea, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness; selling it for filthy lucre, even as Judas sold his Master for a price; making a common traffic for the redemption of sins, like a merchant of the earth; setting up sinners as saints in the eyes of poor simple creatures; teaching false miracles, and bidding the multitude make payment for them. Here, in this very chapel, even on this very spot where I now stand, even here was *this* done! Here once stood the shrine of Becket, who was made little less than God himself. For here did thousands, and tens of thousands, bow the knee before that shrine, till the hard nature of the stones themselves wore away, shewing to this hour the hollow print of such idolatry. Here the deceived multitude made vows, set up lights, whilst some of them gave their last coin to procure a blessing from a shrine of mouldering and senseless bones. Are not these things true? Were they not done in the face of all the world, and that by the authority of your Pontiff of Rome? Oh, blinded and benighted state of men! how do I thank God that these errors shall be made to pass away, though it be at the price of the blood of saints and martyrs! The pride of your Pope is alike intolerant and intolerable. What said Bishop Tonstall to it, when he preached against the supremacy of Rome, before King Henry the Eighth? 'I saw Pope Julius, quoth the Bishop, 'more than thirty years agone, when one of his chamberlains raised for him his gown, because that he was too stately to do it for himself, and Julius did stretch forth his foot, that a venerable nobleman, who lay prostrate on the ground before him, might kiss it with reverence as a duty. I then thought I saw Cornelius, the good centurion, submitting himself to Peter, and much honouring him; but I saw not Peter there to take him up, and to bid him rise, saying, *I am a man as thou art.* And this Pope is the man who often boasts in his bulls, and in his canons, that he can dispense *contra Petrum*, *contra Paulum*, *contra vetus et novum Testamentum*, and that he *plenitudine potestatis tantum potest quantum Deus.* Oh, vain and horrible presumption! If this be not the very spirit of Antichrist, shew me where it may be found? And again, God willeth that every man should have understanding of His Word, and of His law; that every man should pray unto Him with his heart and with his mind; and the Bishop of Rome willeth, that no man should understand his very prayers to God, ordaining the mass to be said in a dead tongue. God would, that men should confess their sins together, and should acknowledge their offences, each to the other, when

they have offended each other. But the Pope will have no confession but to his own priests. Talk of blood, and who is so bloody as he?—seeing that the learned and the ignorant, the wise and the simple; men, women, and even children, have perished at the stake for his decree. What is this but the death of those whose souls cry from beneath the altar? 'The souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held.' And they were bid to rest, 'yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.' And these are the martyrs for the truth of God's Word; and he that now sitteth upon the Seven Hills, in the pomp of the purples and the scarlets of this world, even he shall be cast down, and in his place shall be found 'the blood of prophets and of saints;' and never will I be amongst them who fall down and worship the abominations of such a power; but I will, with my last breath, give all honour and glory to God; to Him who was, and is, and is to come. Thus have I declared to you all my mind in the great cause of Truth; not for any enmity, malice, or misliking, that I bear unto the man who is now the Pope, since I know him not; but I speak it in respect to the vain-glory, the assumption, and the tyranny of his office. It may be that my simplicity in thus openly speaking of the matter will cost me life; but I can take comfort even in that peril, well remembering the words of our holy Master: 'Fear not them that can kill the body, and after that, there is no more that they can do; but rather fear Him who hath power to kill and to cast into hell.'"

"Have you done this railing talk," said Thornton, "or must we hear you farther; I promised you, afore you began to discourse, that you should have leave to speak your heart; and a foul heart it turns out to be, as ever hung upon the common shambles. Will you say on, or will you that we now proceed to the examination?"

"I am ready to make answer to whatever questions you may address to me," said Wilford; "seeing that it is my duty to have in my mouth a reason for the faith that is in my heart."

"First, then," continued Thornton, "you are accused of having, being a priest, married a woman, called Alice Mordaunt; and having lived with her, openly and shamefully in the sight of all men, as your wife, and having had by her two children, both now pronounced bastards."

"My wife! my children!" exclaimed Owen; and for some

minutes he was unable to reply. He took a fair handkerchief from under his gown, and wiped his eyes and brows with it, and then he thus answered: "I did marry in early life, before I was in Holy Orders, a woman discreet and virtuous; and I have lived with her, after God's ordinance, for more than thirty years: I never have, and never will desert her, with my own consent."

"Your offence is not in having married before you took Holy Orders," replied Thornton; "but in having lived with her after your ordination; that is your sin."

"It would have been a greater sin to have abandoned her," said Wilford, "and to have taken to myself the daughters or the wives of other men, as some have done, with little shew of remorse."

"You allow, then, that you did live with such a woman, or wife?" said Friar John."

"I did live with my wife," answered Wilford; "and, in doing so, I did no wrong; seeing that marriage, from the foundation of the world, was a sacred ordinance of God. The first marriage being in Paradise, before the Fall of Man; and the first miracle performed by our blessed Master being at Cana, at a marriage feast. King Edward's laws also allowed of marriage in the ministers of the church; and I took upon me Holy Orders in the first year of his reign. Thus, I did neither offend against the laws of my God, nor of my king. And for my children, they were born in honourable wedlock, and they have been brought up in the love and the fear of God; so that they are no bastards, but, I trust, right and lawful heirs of the promise."

"And better had it been for them had they been strangled in the cradle, than have lived to learn your heresies," said Harpsfield.

Wilford looked sternly upon the Archdeacon as he spoke; a flush overspread his cheeks, and, for a moment, there was an expression of deep resentment in the countenance even of Owen as he answered: "There is no man who could have done such a deed but yourself. You, Harpsfield, are a fit instrument for the cruel acts of that power under which you act, more like a savage than a man. The hungry lion, or the fierce tiger, that preys on human blood, does it but to satisfy the necessities of his daily food; but you do all in wantonness, and rejoice to witness the tortures you inflict. I have learned too, though but lately, your inhuman cruelty to my child—to my poor, poor Rose!" He burst into an agony of tears as

he spoke; and whilst his voice was rendered almost inarticulate from the contest of his feelings, he continued: "I could curse you; the heart of a father could pay the deed with a father's curse, but that, as a servant of my God, I dare not do it."

"Go on with the examination," said Harpsfield; "let us not waste our time. Proceed to the next article; that is the chiefest of all."

Wilford endeavoured to compose himself, and begged a cup of water. It was allowed him; and, as he appeared much spent and nearly sinking, he was permitted to sit down for a brief space, to rest himself in a chair. Soon after, the Commissioners commenced their examination on that point of faith which had hitherto proved fatal to almost all the Protestants. It was the touchstone by which they were tried; and by it, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Philpot, and indeed the whole of the noble army of martyrs who perished in Queen Mary's time, had been consigned to the stake; this point of doctrine, so formidable in its consequences, being no other than the argument respecting the real presence in the Sacrament. Owen Wilford replied to this dangerous question in a manner so similar to his late master, Thomas Cranmer, that he stood instantly convicted of heresy in the sight of all his judges.

This point settled and at rest, others were but slightly moved, since they wanted no more as necessary for their determination to convict him; yet for form's sake, they did slightly go through the examination of what, in the church of Rome, is called the Seven Sacraments. Wilford would not admit their number, far less their authority. In like manner he disclaimed all masses for the dead, the use of images and idols as objects of worship, pilgrimages, setting up of lights at the altars of saints, the worship of angels, paying for absolutions, buying indulgences, acts of supererogation on the part of the saints for the relief of souls in purgatory, praying to the Virgin, and all other particulars upon which he was examined according to the received doctrine of the Roman creed; so that it plainly appeared, after the argument had closed, that he was really the Protestant his life and preaching had hitherto induced them to suspect.

These examinations were altogether long and tedious; and Wilford replied to each in a manner very similar to other enlightened men of his time, who had suffered for the Truth's sake. We shall not, therefore, give his answers to the reader; but should he feel desirous of making himself fully acquainted

with these solid grounds of argument, upon which the supporters of the Reformed church founded their objections to the faith of Rome, besides that excellent book, "Fox's Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs," we would recommend to his perusal Dr. Wordsworth's "Ecclesiastical Biography;" a work truly worthy the attention of every lover of English history and of the Established Church.

To return from this digression. After the arguments had closed, the same being taken down in writing by the notaries there present, Friar John rose up, and thus addressed the prisoner:—"We have now, Master Wilford, fully, clearly, and entirely examined you respecting all those offences articulated against you in the indictment. Yet, as we would be loth to condemn you, even by your own words, though by the tenor of our Commission we might do so, we shall call in one or two witnesses, that will be examined as to the doctrines they have at sundry times heard delivered by you from the orations or homilies in your church; seeing also, that those heretical books and writings which were found in your house, some of which you admit to be your own doing, do also witness against you.—Crier! call in the evidence."

The crier of the court arose and said aloud, "Samuel Collins, come into the court, there to make answer to such questions as shall be put to you respecting the prisoner."

The summons was instantly obeyed; and Samuel Collins, to the utter astonishment of Owen Wilford, appeared as a witness against him. Owen looked at him stedfastly for a moment, and then said, "I have never seen this man before in all my life."

"But I have seen you, and heard you too, Master Wilford," replied Collins; "and I heard you curse the Pope, and the Queen, and the Mass-book, in your homily, as I am come here to swear to; and am now ready to depose to the same."

"Swift and ready, indeed, to shed blood," said Wilford.

The witness was then sworn; and in few but gross terms, delivered his evidence, which went to shew that he had once, in company with Sir Francis Morgan, attended Divine service in the church of Wellminster, where the prayers were said in English, and a homily preached by Owen, in which he inveighed against popery. The whole of his deposition being taken down in writing, he was dismissed; and the crier of the court summoned the appearance of a second witness, by the name of Sir Francis Morgan, knight, who was duly bid to advance before the judges.

On hearing this, Owen Wilford started, and exclaimed, "Good Heaven! What, my own nephew! the very man, who, when a child, was some time under my roof, and who, in maturer years, I endeavoured to reclaim from the error of his ways—must he too be brought against me? But God's will be done!"

"No kindred is to be preferred to Truth," said Friar John; "since we are enjoined in Holy Writ to forsake father, mother, wife, children, and all for the Truth's sake. I know this witness comes with bitter reluctance against you; but he comes, against his own natural feelings, to do his duty."

Sir Francis Morgan now entered the court with an affected air of concern in his countenance and demeanour; and being sworn, he supported the part he had assumed with consummate hypocrisy, not stating one single article against Owen Wilford without its being drawn from him by the questions of Thornton and Friar John. But when he did reply, under an apparent desire to palliate his uncle's conduct and doctrines, he threw out such insidious attacks upon his principles, that, had all else been wanting, Morgan's evidence would alone have been sufficient to convict Wilford of heresy before such judges: and under an acknowledgment of a great obligation for the kind intentions of his uncle towards himself, he stated that Owen had zealously endeavoured to impress upon him a belief in the new doctrines of the Reformed church. This was a thing above all others hateful to the Popish priests, since making converts they had long considered to be exclusively the property of their own church.

When Wilford heard this, he turned suddenly towards Morgan, and asked him, in an indignant manner, if he could recollect the cause of his attempting to impress upon him a belief in those doctrines. Sir Francis bowed with mock gravity in reply; and Wilford, disgusted with his hypocrisy, exclaimed, "You were lost and abandoned to every sense of moral duty, and I made a last, a fruitless attempt, to impress upon your obdurate mind a sense of religious duty in the hope to save you—"

"From the dangerous doctrines of the church of Rome, as you termed them," replied Sir Francis. "I remember it well; and though I declined receiving your opinion, I retain a grateful sense of the kindness which inspired your zeal for me; for certainly you thought to do me a service, though you were yourself mistaken."

"Ungrateful, wretched man!" said Owen, "you are beneath

my resentment! May God forgive you this last act of baseness, as I forgive it!"

Sir Francis Morgan was dismissed, and the prosecution for the Crown (or, perhaps, we should say, for the Pope) being here closed, the prisoner was called upon for his defence.

"I know," said Owen Wilford, in reply to this appeal, "that my defence will nothing avail me, and therefore I shall not enlarge upon it; since the man who is already condemned in the opinion of his judge, can hope but little to work upon his mercy, or to look for any at his hands. Yet, as I feel loth that those who are here present should depart, and by my silence think my cause so weak that I could offer no answer, I will but say a sentence or two, and then rest me from the labour, and leave judgment to my God. That I am guilty of heresy, I deny; as I do most devoutly and reverently believe whatever I am enjoined to believe by the written Word of God; and as far as the Fathers of the Church agree with the same, I believe in their doctrines. and no farther. That I am guilty of treason or disloyalty to the Queen, as once or twice in the course of this day's argument you have charged me withal, I also deny; as I have ever, both in my preaching and living, taught the duty to that sovereign ruler, whom it may please God, in His providence, to set over this nation. And I do daily recommend her Majesty in my prayers to Him, who hath the hearts of princes in His keeping, fervently beseeching Him that He, in his great mercy, may so enlighten the mind of her Grace, that she may no longer suffer these persecutions against her people, but know God even as He is, a God of truth and of great pity. I deny also all guilt in respect of my wife; and I profess, till my last breath, to believe her to be my dear and honoured wife, hoping to meet her hereafter, where sorrow and separation shall be no more. And having said this, I shall conclude with a few remarks upon the matter of your examination, and the evidence brought against me."

Owen Wilford then attempted to reply once more to some points that had come under discussion; but Harpsfield, Thornton, Friar John, and others, following the common custom of the time, in drowning by an outcry the arguments they would not hear, set up their voices together, even in shoutings and tumult, crying, "Blasphemy! blasphemy! heresy! Hear no more; away with him! excommunicate him! proceed to judgment." So that, in very despair of being heard, Wilford gave over the attempt. And when some degree of order was at length restored, he looked at them with a countenance full

of firmness and dignity, as he said, "I will not stoop to answer railings with railing, for this day's tumult does but remind me of that outcry which was made against St. Paul, when he would have put down the idols of silver amongst the Greeks, when nothing could be heard, save that cry, '*Great is Diana of the Ephesians!*' I commit myself wholly to God, who in the greatness of His power and of his mercy, will sustain me, though the whole earth itself should rise up against me, so long as I maintain the Truth, for the glory of His name. He will not deny me, if I do not deny Him. *Fidelis est Deus qui non sinit nos tentari supra id quod possumus;* and I thank God most heartily that I have been thus long spared to end my life as a witness of His truth.—Now do as you list, for I am ready. Life or death you may decree me; but to happiness or misery, God alone can lead me."

For a few minutes, the Commissioners whispered together. Thornton then arose, and thus addressed the prisoner:—"Owen Wilford, you have this day, before the Spiritual Court here assembled, been proved guilty of the charges whereof you have been indicted. You have been most charitably, learnedly, and kindly entreated to accept of the Queen's mercy, which has been held out to you, so that you would but renounce your manifold errors, and return into the true Church. But all has been in vain, and we are utterly void of hope of you. You are clean become a castaway, a blasphemer, a reviler—a setter-up of new things, a caster-down of old ones—a heretic: first denying the Pope's Holiness, and saying he hath turned the Word of God into a lie; and in this you are as the Pharisees, pretending only to hold for the truth, having always in your mouth *verbum Domini*, but having in your heart the falsehood of the devil. Many other wicked sinners did the same; for so cried Basilides, so cried Photinus, so Nestorius, so Macedonius, and so Pelagius, and so do all heretics — yea, and so did Lucifer himself, being the father of heretics; for did he not say, *Scriptum est*, when he would have used his worst temptation? and now so he says with you, and with you all when you cry out, Down with the Pope, down with images, down with altars—yea, down with all that is godly, and set up what is false, in their stead! Thus, you being convicted, as a rotten and offensive member of the Church, we shall do our duty, and proceed first to excommunicate you, having full commission so to do, and then to degrade you; and this ended, you being no longer a member of the spiritual power, we give you over to the secular arm,

to suffer the penalty of the law for your offences. And they will deal with you wisely and justly, giving your filthy body to be burned for the heresy of your more filthy soul; acting in this, according to the law of Holy Writ, which commanded the death of the priests of Baal for worshipping a false God. I, and these my fellows in commission, do now proceed to make an end of our part with you; leaving what remains to the flames on earth, and to the fiereer flames of hell."

Thornton now deseended from his seat, and he and all the priests assembled took a lighted waxen taper in their hands, and, standing around Wilford, the Suffragan of Dover proeeeded to read aloud, as follows:

THE SENTENCE OF EXCOMMUNICATION.

"By the authority of God, the Almighty Father, and of his Son, and of the Holy Spirit; of Mary, the mother of God, and of all heavenly spirits; of the blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles, to whom God hath given power of binding and loosing; and of the other Apostles, and of all the Saints of God, we exeommunicate, and anathematize, and curse, and banish, and expel, from the children of the holy Mother Church, and from all christian soeiety, Owen Wilford, and all consenting to him, whose wicked rage and violence directed against us and the Chureh of God, we have so often sustained. Let him be accursed in the town and in the field, in entering and going out; let him be aceursed in his house, eating or drinking, sleeping or waking; let him be aecursed in sitting or standing, in working or reposing; let him be accursed in every place, in all his works—in his outward limbs, and in his entrails—from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, let there be no soundness in him; let his way be dark and slippery, his children orphans, and his wife a widow, the Angel of the Lord chastening them; let their fate and their portion be with Dathan and Abiram, who went down into hell alive; and with Judas, the betrayer of God, and with those who said to God, Depart from us, we have not known thy ways. Let their bodies be as leprous as King Uzziah, and Miriam, the sister of Moses; be they also, on account of their demerits, struck with St. Anthony's fire. And for this man, Owen Wilford, and for his multiplied misdeeds and impenitent heart, let him be consumed by the judgment of heaven: as these eandles are extinguished—[here all the churehmen threw down upon the pavement the lighted tapers they bore in their hands]—so may his soul be extin-

guished: let him be delivered over from the help of God to the eternal company of the devils whom he served on earth; so be it, so be it—Amen!"*

When the Bishop of Dover had concluded this dreadful malediction, Owen Wilford raised his hands and eyes to heaven, and exclaimed aloud—"From this, your impious sentence, I appeal to God the Almighty father, for whose sake I am thus condemned by the tongues of men."

"Proceed to the degradation," said Thornton. "Bring forth the Mass Apparel."

A person in attendance now brought forward the mock garments of a Popish priest; a surplice, albe, cope, etc. But whereas, in the dress of a priest who is to perform mass, every thing is costly and magnificent, in these garments all was wretched, mean, and old. The cope was of the coarsest canvass, and the surplice of common serge. Owen Wilford, knowing how vain had been the resistance of Ridley in a like case, patiently submitted, and suffered them to do with him as they pleased; and only remarked, that it was his duty to submit, well remembering the cruel mockery that had been shewn to his heavenly Master, when his enemies hailed him in scorn as the king of the Jews.

Whilst this was doing, Thornton and Harpsfield gave him bitter taunts; but Friar John was silent. Perhaps the presence of Sir Richard Southwell, who turned away his head, that he might not witness what was going forward, caused this forbearance on the part of the Friar. They now came to enact that ceremony of the degradation, which, in fact, like all the rest, was a libel on their own church, since they obliged Wilford to hold in his hands the chalice, and the wafer-cake (called the singing-bread), as Thornton read a preamble in Latin, from the law of the Pope, on the degradation of spiritual persons. This concluded, they took away the chalice, and put a book into his hands (but of what nature that book might be, we have not been able to ascertain by any authority), and then Thornton made an end of the ceremony, by repeating the Latin form of turning Owen Wilford for ever out of the Church, according to the law of the Bishop of Rome.

* For the form and words of the sentence of excommunication here given, the Author is indebted to a most interesting work of considerable talent and research, entitled "Historical Notices of the Collegiate Church of St. Martin-le-Grand, with observations on the different kinds of Sanctuary, by Alfred John Kempe, F.S.A." Published by Messrs. Longman and Co.

Thornton and Harpsfield now proceeded to strip the Protestant of the mock garments in which they had dressed him; and as they did so, they continued to revile him, first the one, and then the other, like two persons who take up the words of each other in a duet. "This is the man who cursed, and who swore, and who reviled his Holiness the Pope," said Harpsfield.

"The Pope now reviles, and degrades, and tramples upon this man," answered Thornton.

"This man tore down God's images and cast them out," chimed in Harpsfield.

"And now he is cast out to the devil and to hell," rejoined Thornton.

"And hell and the devil shall rejoice over this man," sang Harpsfield; and so they went on abusing and reviling Owen Wilford all the time they were removing the wretched apparel of the mass; and when all was completed, forgetful of the sanctity of the place, forgetful of their own self-respect, and even of common decency, (as it had repeatedly happened before in similar cases), they fairly set to hooting and shouting, as they gave over the excommunicated and degraded heretic to the secular power, represented in the person of the Mayor of Canterbury, whose prisoner the Protestant had now become.

The venerable Old Wilford bore these repeated mocks and insults with a composure and a patience that might have moved any heart, but one of stone, to pity. Worn out by long suffering, and the exertions he had made that day in defence of his opinions, he now appeared pale as death; deeply dejected, the very image of sorrow. He once more attempted to speak, but his voice seemed to fail him; and the Mayor of Canterbury, who probably felt for the sufferer some little motion of compassion, out of charity, was hastening him from the enraged Court to his prison, as a far more desirable place, when a cry, so shrill and piercing that it startled the ears of every one assembled, burst from the crowd, which stood near the chapel-door, and a woman rushed through the press, regardless of every thing but her own feelings, darted forward, and fell nearly senseless at the feet of Owen. She was instantly raised by the citizens who were in attendance upon the Mayor; and on looking upon her (as some friendly hand threw in her face the water that remained in the cup that had been allowed to Wilford), Owen recognized his maimed and tortured child.

"It is Rose! It is my daughter! Let her come to me; let me clasp her in my arms. Do not keep an old man, and a father, from his dear, dear child."

Owen was suffered to advance. The Mayor hung down his head upon his bosom, the citizens wept, and even the railers were silent, overawed, in spite of themselves, by a sight that nature made too powerful for resistance. Wilford embraced, kissed Rose, took her in his arms, fixed his eyes upon her face, gazed in silence, and then casting them upon her arm, which was still bound up and hung in a sling that was about her neck, he uttered a fearful exclamation, and burst into a passionate flood of tears. "Oh! my poor Rose, my child!" said he, "my dear child, this is dreadful—this is too much. Good heaven! how could that wretch live and use you thus?" Owen's patience forsook him; and, turning suddenly towards Harpsfield, he exclaimed, whilst a look of almost frenzied agony seemed to animate his features, "I do curse thee, thou blood-thirsty and cruel man! A father's curse be on thy head for this deed! May God requite thee!"

A murmur arose in the Court, but no one answered; for the sight of a man, so moved by deep passion and despair, produced a stunning effect upon every calmer mind.

"Rose, dear Rose, kiss me, my child," said Owen, "kiss your poor old father. You will remember him, you will think of him sometimes when he is in his grave. May God Almighty shower down blessings on this innocent head!"

"And will they, can they be so cruel?" sobbed Rose. "Can they—can they take you from us, and burn so good a man as you are, my dear father?" She looked at Thornton and Harpsfield. "But I know who are your judges," continued Rose; "and you will perish, for they are fiends and not men who have dealt with you. There stands the wretch who would have destroyed my body! and there stands Thornton, a wretch even worse than he, who would have destroyed my soul."

Thornton caught these last words as they fell from the lips of Rose Wilford; and fearing what would follow, and that his shameless conduct towards her might thus become publicly exposed, he resolved at all hazards to put an end to the scene, and hastily interrupted Rose by an exertion of his power; so that, without pity or remorse, he caused the unhappy girl to be torn from her father's embrace, and instantly turned out of the church, whilst Owen Wilford was hurried back to prison.

Sir Richard Southwell witnessed this scene of cruelty with a degree of sympathy it would be impossible to describe; and the instant he could clear the throng about him, he also quitted the church, not only to ascertain by what means Rose had contrived to enter the court during the trial, but likewise to afford whatever assistance it might be in his power to give, to soothe the distressed state of her mind, and to shelter her from any farther injuries, on the part of Harpsfield and Thornton.

After the removal of Owen Wilford from the court, three prisoners of inferior degree were brought forward to take their trials, also on a charge of heresy. The first of these was old Abel Allen, whose affair of accidentally knocking down the pyx was not forgotten, and, indeed, it was now made one of the principal charges against him. Abel was of less consequence in point of learning, station, and public repute, than his master, the unhappy Owen Wilford. The Commissioners, therefore, made short work of it with him, since they did not think it worth their while to address to him any long orations for the benefit of his soul; and they proceeded at once, after a few necessary forms being observed, to put Abel to the touchstone, by which all the Reformers were proved to be such.

Abel Allen stood firm to his faith; and although he endeavoured at first, by two or three ingenious shifts, to evade the subject, still, when brought to the point, he would not deny the truth. A few other questions, besides this one of so much import, were also put to him; and his answer to that which required him to declare his mind respecting the authority of the Pope, was too characteristic of the old man to be here omitted.

"Please your Worships," said Allen, "as to my mind about the Pope, I am much of the same mind about the matter of his Holiness of Rome, as the Earl of Wiltshire's dog was when he was brought before him."

"The Earl of Wiltshire's dog!" said Thornton; "what do you mean by that, fellow?"

"Please your Worship," replied old Abel, "I will tell you the story, and specially as some people have thought it is a sign, or an omen, or some such thing, that bodes no good to his Reverence the Pope's rule in England. You must know, then, that King Henry the Eighth sent the Earl of Wiltshire to Rome, to do something for him in the matter of turning off his old Queen Catherine to take a new Queen. And my Lord

of Wilts had a fine spaniel dog that he was very fond of, and it used to go after his heels as my dog Pincher did after mine —poor thing! it grieves my heart when I think of Pincher, and that, perhaps, he and I shall never meet more! Now, when my Lord of Wilts went before the Pope, he wanted him to kiss his great toe, as the way of it is at Rome. But my Lord did not like to do it; for, mayhap, he thought the Pope's toe no better than any other man's. And so his Greatness ordered one of his priests to lift up his petticoats to make the Earl do his duty, and so it was done by the priest, and out he stuck his foot, just as I do mine. And my Lord of Wilt's dog being close beside his master, not liking the business, stepped forward, and did so seize and handle the Pope's toe between his jaws, growling and grumbling all the while, that his Holiness was fain to cry out to my Lord to take off his dog, or that he should have no toe left to be kissed by the kings and emperors of Christendom. And so my Lord did as he was begged to do, but the Pope never asked him to kiss his foot again, for the Earl of Wiltshire took special care always to bring the spaniel along with him when he went to pay his respects to the Pope. And now, I say, that just as much as my Lord's dog reverenced his Holiness, so do I, and I hope no offence in saying so."

Abel Allen, of course, was sharply reproved for thus irreverently delivering his opinion. And when he was also reproved, during another part of the examination, for insisting on understanding some phrase in the New Testament literally, whilst they insisted it should be looked upon as figurative, his judges asked him if he really knew what was the meaning of a parable.

Abel replied, "Yes; he knew that very well; for a parable was the sign of a thing without the thing itself being expressed. For your Worship must know," continued old Abel, "that I once heard Master Latimer, who now is dead—the more shame to them that killed him—preach about parables, and he gave the congregation such a notable example about one that I shall never forget it. 'For look you, brethren,' (quoth Master Latimer) 'when ye shall see a goodly painting of a fox preaching out of a friar's cowl, none is so mad as to take this to be a fox that preacheth; but everybody knows well enough the meaning of the matter, which is to paint out unto us what hypocrisy, craft, and subtle dissimulation lieth hid many times under these friars' cowls, willing us to beware of them. But if ye see a devil be painted peeping near the

preaching fox, then may you know all the world over that he is a Spanish fox. Now that is what I call a parable of Queen Mary's days," continued Abel: "no offence, I hope, to Friar John de Villa Garcina, though he seems to take it to himself by being in such a fume about my words."

The Court had now quite enough of Abel's stories and explanations to shew that he understood the signification of a parable. He was instantly fully convicted of heresy, and turned over to the secular power to be dealt with according to the laws.

Allen dismissed, the Crier of the Court now called aloud for Martha Plaise, and her grandson, Thomas Plaise, to come before their judges. They both obeyed the summons. The poor old woman, whose infirmities had increased upon her by her confinement in prison, came forward leaning upon a staff. She was clean and decently dressed, and in her aged and worn features there was a character of firmness and composure by no means habitual to her. She led on poor Tommy, who, notwithstanding his loss of sight, was a very pretty, innocent-looking youth, scarcely more than twelve years of age, with a head of hair as light and as curly as that of a cherub in a picture.

It had been at first intended to indict the poor woman for witchcraft, under the statute of the thirty-third of Henry the Eighth; but on previously examining the evidence on this point, it was found that all Gammer Plaise's supposed charms proved to be nothing more than the result of some skilful and useful knowledge in the herbs common to the county of Kent; and that the whole of her fortune-telling amounted to this—that she foretold to light, froward, and giddy damsels, that they would turn out ill and be unhappy, unless they amended their ways; whereas to the industrious, prudent, and modest country maidens she promised good husbands, a quiet house, and a hopeful offspring. The Commissioners, therefore, thought it would be as well to leave the charge of witchcraft out of the indictment, and to proceed against her upon that of heresy, which was a much more tangible matter. To this the accused now pleaded firmly that she was not guilty; and the Commissioners, in order to contradict her, at least in their own view of the subject, went immediately to work, and asked at once that fearful question which we have before noticed as the usual touchstone to detect a Protestant.

Gammer Plaise answered clearly, openly, and firmly, to the point, with a degree of sense and acuteness, and with so

much of sound argument in her discourse, that it would have baffled the sophistry of her adversaries to reply to her, had they attempted any reply at all. But this they did not condescend to do, but instantly proceeded to pronounce her guilty of heresy on the clearest possible evidence, viz. that of her own confession.

These judges of spiritual truth next proceeded to examine the boy. Tommy said little, but what he did say was to the purpose; for he declared that he believed in the faith taught him by his granny, being the same faith for which his father had been burnt at Smithfield, and that he would stand to that, and king Edward's Catechism, to the last hour of his life.

"Then you must burn with your granny, boy," said Thornton; "though, of the two, I grant, she is the worst—she who has taught you things that will bring you to the stake. How dare you, old beldame! sacrifice such a young lad as that by your wickedness? To do this, you cannot care for him at all."

"I not care for my poor boy Tommy?" exclaimed the Gammer; "and he the son of my only son, who is dead; though he does not lie in a grave, for your people scattered abroad even his very ashes!—I will tell you, Thornton, how I care for him; even as a mother careth for the suckling that hangs upon her breast. So much for natural affection! But if you ask me why I dare sacrifice him, I will answer you by the spirit. The boy is God's, and not mine. And even as Abraham did of old, when the Lord called his son Isaac to the sacrifice, even so will I offer up my boy for the faith of the true God; and rather than see him turn to your worship, I would, with these aged hands, bind him myself to the stake, even as Abraham bound Isaac to the altar."

"And would you do this woman?" said Friar John; "would you have that boy die thus!"

"Ay, that I would," replied Gammer Plaise; "though, if I could save him safe in soul as well as body, you should have my leave to rack these old limbs piecemeal. But God will not desert him. Tommy shall join his poor father in heaven, seeing that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; all things live in Him."

"And you, young wretch!" said Harpsfield; "you hear what this old witch of a grandmother would do by you?"

"Yes," cried Gammer Plaise, "she would do by him as did the mother in the Maccabees by her seven sons; give herself, and her nearest and dearest, to preserve their souls

alive. But if I were the witch that you call me, Harpsfield, I will tell you what I would do for you."

"For me? you old beldame!" said Harpsfield; "why, what would you do for me?"

"I would do as the witch of Endor did for Saul, call up the dead to denounce a fearful vengeance upon you for all your cruelty. The spirits of those, whom you, without remorse have committed to the flames, should stand before your eyes, like sheeted spectres, in fearful array; they should chill that fierce blood, and stir the slumberer conscience, even in its den of sloth and sin; and a hand, one poor little withered hand, should flit before your sight, and never, never leave it!"

"I will hear no more!" said Thornton; "this is insult and blasphemy. Let us proceed to judgment."

"Ay! ay!" cried Gammer Plaise, vehemently; "sit there, Thornton, and pronounce judgment, as Caiaphas did of old, to swell thy pride, and to purchase, by the blood of the guiltless, the favour of the multitude!"

"Silence woman!" said Thornton; "and hear the sentence that I am about to pass on you and that blind boy."

Thornton proceeded. He first pronounced judgment on Tommy, giving him the precedency on account of his sex. He then denounced it against Gammer Plaise; and concluded in these words, according to the presumptuous and impious authority under which he acted from Rome:—"and after your body shall have been devoured by the flames, I summon you, Martha Plaise, in the name of Almighty God, to a fearful judgment, there to answer for all the sins, blasphemies, and iniquities of your life. Amen."

Gammer Plaise stood as erect as her infirmities would let her, to receive the sentence; and when it was concluded, she fixed her eye stedfastly upon the face of Thornton, and extending her arm, as she raised it towards him, said in a firm voice, and with a manner of peculiar solemnity: "And I, Thornton, summon you to appear before the judgment-seat of Almighty God, upon the day and hour of my burning, there to answer for the unjust sentence you have dared to pass on me and mine!" She did not speak another word, but took Tommy, who was weeping bitterly, by the hand, and turning about, motioned to the men, who stood ready to lead her back to prison, that they should pass on.

Thornton turned white as death at hearing her words, and trembled in every nerve of his body. He descended from his seat, but seemed so abstracted and confused, that twice did

Sir John Baker pull him by the sleeve, before he could gain the attention he solicited.

Sir John at length succeeded, and now earnestly invited Thornton (having already engaged Harpsfield) to go home to sup with him off a glorious haunch of venison cooked by the famous mother Garnish, the heretic, who had been spared by Thornton on account of her skill in fricasseed cocks-combs, and who was now promoted to the service of this worthy justice of the peace.

CHAPTER XXII.

We have before stated to the reader the humane manner in which Sir Richard Southwell had caused Rose to be removed from the prison to his own house, where she was attended with so much skill and care, that in less than three weeks she was able to leave her chamber; and her hand that had been burnt, although useless to her for ever, no longer gave her severe pain. Nevertheless, she was still weak and delicate from her late sufferings both of body and mind; and as she stedfastly resisted every attempt that was made either by Sir Richard or the Friar to change her faith, the latter insisted that the presence of such an obstinate heretic should no longer be tolerated in the house of his superior.

Still Sir Richard was unwilling to give her up entirely, hoping that time, as she was very young, with good counsel, might induce her to recant her opinions: yet the Friar must be obeyed. He therefore steered a middle course, and hit upon a plan intended at once to satisfy the will of his Confessor, and in some measure to gratify the feelings of his own benevolent mind.

Sir Richard Southwell, from his situation as high sheriff for the county of Kent, possessed considerable influence with Thornton; and he had already used it to mitigate the sufferings of the unhappy Alice, the wife of his ancient friend, Owen Wilford. So that, under a promise (which had been given by Alice herself, when Sir Richard exerted his influence in her behalf) that she would not abscond, but be forthcoming to perform her penance in public at the time specified, Alice was removed to the house of Mother Littlewit, in Canterbury, where Southwell took care she should not want for comforts; though he supplied them in the most cautious manner, lest his kindness to a family so notorious for heresies might bring his own principles into suspicion. When, therefore, Friar John insisted that Rose must be removed from Wellminster Hall, Sir Richard placed her with her mother, to the great comfort of both, as Alice was still gradually sinking under the accumulated weight of years, sickness, and sorrow.

Soon after this removal from Wellminster, Rose was per-

mitted by Sir Richard's intercession to visit her father in prison. Owen was greatly shocked when he learned from her own lips the torture she had suffered from Harpsfield; and, out of mercy to his daughter's feelings, he had forborne to make her acquainted with the day on which he was to take his trial for heresy before the Spiritual Court, and that day was but a brief space after Rose's removal to Widow Littlewit's house.

Rose, who spent all her time in the sick-room of her mother, knew nothing more of the purposed trial, than that it was one day to take place; till, upon the very morning when the trial was actually going forward, she accidentally learned the truth from the heedless gossip of the widow. It is unnecessary to say what her feelings were on this occasion; still, desirous to avoid communicating so sudden a shock to her mother, she did not repeat to her what she had herself heard, and cautioned Widow Littlewit to remain silent. But in agony to know the result, and what would be the doom of her father, Rose instantly set off for the cathedral, forced her way through the crowd, and entered the court, as the reader has already seen, at the very moment Owen Wilford was about to be carried back to prison. Thence she was violently thrust out by order of Thornton; and when followed by Sir Richard Southwell, he found her, with distraction in her looks, returning to her lodgings, to break to her mother, as gently as she could, the fatal news respecting the sentence passed upon her father.

Sir Richard saw her safe home, and there endeavoured to calm her agitated feelings; but finding all his attempts vain, he soon after left her, evincing a deep sympathy both for her sorrows, and for those of her family, whom, notwithstanding all his prejudices, he could not help estecming; though he condemned himself for so doing, when he recollected their obstinate persistance in heresy. This esteem, however, did not extend itself to Edward Wilford; since Sir Richard had been taught to believe that young man was both the cause and the instigator of his daughter's unhappiness and disobedience.

Nothing could be more contradictory than were the feelings and the actions of Sir Richard to each other. He loved his child, whilst he was pursuing a purpose to render her miserable. He was open and candid in his own nature, yet he had taken the most cunning of men for his bosom friend. He sometimes felt that Friar John tyrannised over him, yet

heretic, under pretext that they might contain some information about the father's friends. I did not do it."

"It was the Friar's sole act," said Morgan.

"All one to me," continued Cluny; "you, however, brought me the letters, and told me your plot and the Friar's, to hatch a conspiracy that should involve Edward Wilford, and certain other obnoxious persons, hated by you both; and we were to send Sir Richard Southwell down to Dover on the scent to discover the plot, and secure the conspirators."

"Well, who wants to know that?" cried Collins impatiently.

"I will be heard, to clear myself," replied Cluny.

"You clear yourself!" said Morgan. "Why, you were well paid by the Friar for your part in the business. You never move, Master Attorney, without the angels lend you wings; that you know well enough."

"It is quite reasonable and legal," replied Cluny, "that I should receive a proper compensation for my time; else, how is a man to live by an honourable and gentlemanly profession? I make no charge but what is usual in the law."

"To get men hanged that we wanted out of the way, I grant it," said Morgan; "but do finish this, or we shall never get to the business for which we are met this evening."

"Well then," continued Cluny, "I wrote by your order—observe that—certain letters (in part founded on the true letters aforenamed, detained by Friar John) addressed to Edward Wilford, as from the discontented and suffering Reformers at Frankfort, hinting a vile intent to take away the life of the Queen—a plot to unite with the French to land on our Kentish coasts, as Stafford did at Scarborough—to raise rebellion in England, and once more to bring in King Edward's religion. Well, it was necessary that these letters should be found on somebody, who was to seem as the person employed to convey them to Edward Wilford, and the right men for the plot after their arrival in England. I did choose a man for the purpose. What could I do?—you would not have had me the bearer myself?"

"No," replied Morgan; "but you might have got a better man than Jenkyns."

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"But why did you let Jenkyns abscond?" inquired Morgan.

"I did not let him abscond," replied Cluny. "Jenkyns, of course, was to be free; else, do you suppose he would have undertaken the business? His neck was to be safe. Jenkyns was to turn crown evidence, and to be well paid by the Friar for so doing. He did all that was required of him. He did turn crown evidence; he did accuse Edward Wilford, and got him and the rest of the Friar's enemies laid up in prison."

"And he did finish the whole affair, before the trial of these persons comes on in a court of law, by absconding," said Morgan.

"And how am I to blame for that?" cried Cluny. "Was I to lay violent hands upon such an evidence as this man—upon a person of so much consequence as Jenkyns? I will tell you who was in fault—Friar John, and nobody else. He was to blame. The Friar let the scoundrel have too much money; so Jemmy Jenkyns, a sly old dog as he is, thought it better to make sure work with what he had, and to run no risk of being blown up with his own gunpowder, and so to make off at once with a good round sum. The Friar would not trust the money to my management, forsooth; and see how he has managed himself! He should have given the fish line enough to nibble the bait, but not to run away with bait, hook, and all. But the Friar thought a good dose of gold given at once would make the fellow his own; and see what too much anxiety about the business has done! I am not to blame."

"This matter against Edward Wilford about the conspiracy will certainly fall to the ground," said Morgan, "now that Jenkyns is off. And Sir Richard is so nice in doing what he calls impartial justice to his enemy, that we must stir, or all is over. Hear my plan. Edward Wilford must be got rid of somehow or other."

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"And you, and all of us, will be like to be hanged for the discovery of it," said Collins, "unless you can lay your hands on Jenkyns; for the fellow is off, that is sure, and the devil knows where he is gone."

"That's a bad business, I grant," replied Cluny, "but not a hopeless one; since, if Jenkyns should peach, he is such a known scoundrel that his oath would go for nothing. I chose the fellow on purpose for his character, knowing it was too bad to injure any one but a heretic."

"But that is not the worst," said Morgan; "Timothy Cutt is laid up in Canterbury Castle for some dirty business of his own, and I fear that, to clear himself, he will turn King's evidence, and betray us all."

"Then, before he can do so, we must manage to get him indited for heresy," answered Cluny, "and so burn the rascal out of the way. Sam Collins can swear he heard Cutt curse the Pope and the Queen. And if once he is indicted for heresy, you know, the fellow's oath, accusation, or any thing else, goes for nothing."

"You are a fool, with all your law-shifts," said Morgan; "for I will tell you of one person that neither you nor I can get out of the way, and who, I take it, is like to blow up the whole train of your plots by a single spark, and that is Sir Richard Southwell."

"Sir Richard Southwell!" cried Cluny; "why, he is Edward Wilford's greatest enemy, frightened out of his wits lest the young Protestant rebel should run away with his daughter, your wife elect, Sir Francis. Surely, he would be glad to get Edward Wilford hanged out of the way, and we have brought matter enough against him in this conspiracy to do that."

"You judge all men by yourself, Master Attorney," replied Morgan; "Jenkyns having absconded (a thing for which you alone are to blame), that circumstance has made Sir Richard resolve to sift all the evidence and the whole affair to the bottom, before he proceeds against Edward Wilford. Now you know what you and all of us have to fear."

"Then, why don't you get married as fast as you can?" said Cluny; "do that and you secure Sir Richard, and our necks will be safe too, for he will then not dare to suspect that his son-in-law can have had anything to do with planning and discovering a conspiracy."

"He has no suspicion of me at present, I grant," replied Morgan; "and I am to be married on the nineteenth day of this month of November. If we can but keep all things

hushed till then, I care not a rush for Sir Richard, or any one else. The damsel will be mine, her fortune must be mine, and we will then find some measures to put the heir of the Mordaunt estates out of my way.—Now, Cluny, hear me and what I have to propose; and if you do not consent to do it, I will not spare you; for if your schemes fail of bringing you to the gallows, Sam Collins and I join together, heart and hand, to hang you between us."

"I have no fear whatever of Master Collins," said Cluny; "for, I think, he knows that I have him already pretty well in my power. The robbing of the jewels in the Bishop of Winchester's house, when the mob broke into it in Southwark, is a business of which I could produce some evidence; besides, Master Collins's affair of knocking down the cross, at Cranbrook, and stealing the silver image of the Virgin out of the church,—things very likely to obtain Master Collins the mercy of our gracious Queen."

"You be hanged!" said Collins, something doggedly; "what I did, I did to serve my friend, Sir Francis Morgan, when he lost every groat he had in the world, in the match of Rooper against Captain Spurcrop's black crower. I never desert a friend."

"What's the use of upbraiding one another," said Morgan; "we are all in the same boat, and we must float or sink together. Let us, then, rather see how we can act to trim her against foul weather, than thus turn to brawling and ruffling among ourselves."

"You began it, I am sure," cried Cluny, "by charging me with letting Jemmy Jenkyns abscond—a thing I will be cleared from before I find one point more in the law to help you. I will tell you the whole affair: and you shall hear me, or not a thing will I do more to serve you."

"Then, make short work of it," said Morgan, "and do spare me those long preambles you are so fond of larding into your discourse, just as a cook lards a capon."

"I copied the letters you know of, that were to seem as if they were addressed to Edward Wilford," continued the Attorney.

"You forged them, you mean, Cluny," cried Morgan.

"Forged or copied, it was by your own order, Sir Francis," replied Cluny; "and how could I have done it, had not you and Friar John managed to lay hands on some real letters addressed to Edward Wilford from Frankfort? The Friar stopped them, because they were going to the son of an old

heretic, under pretext that they might contain some information about the father's friends. I did not do it."

"It was the Friar's sole act," said Morgan.

"All one to me," continued Cluny; "you, however, brought me the letters, and told me your plot and the Friar's, to hatch a conspiracy that should involve Edward Wilford, and certain other obnoxious persons, hated by you both; and we were to send Sir Richard Southwell down to Dover on the scent to discover the plot, and secure the conspirators."

"Well, who wants to know that?" cried Collins impatiently.

"I will be heard, to clear myself," replied Cluny.

"You clear yourself!" said Morgan. "Why, you were well paid by the Friar for your part in the business. You never move, Master Attorney, without the angels lend you wings; that you know well enough."

"It is quite reasonable and legal," replied Cluny, "that I should receive a proper compensation for my time; else, how is a man to live by an honourable and gentlemanly profession? I make no charge but what is usual in the law."

"To get men hanged that we wanted out of the way, I grant it," said Morgan; "but do finish this, or we shall never get to the business for which we are met this evening."

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"The best way to silence Sir Richard would be by your marrying his daughter," cried Cluny. "I say it for your own sake. I do not conceive that I am in any danger, since I merely acted as a professional person in your affairs; I was not to be supposed to know if the letters I wrote were other than mere copies."

"Pshaw!" cried Morgan; "such a paltry quibble as that will never save your neck, Cluny, if it comes to the worst. If I am in danger, you are, and Friar John and Sam Collins as well as ourselves. Hear my plan to get us all out of it; for I see that you are but a fool, with all your law, at a pinch like this. Edward Wilford must die; else we are ruined, and no Mordaunt estates are mine hereafter. Now, Cluny, if I promise to pay you one thousand marks (I shall have plenty of money when I am married), will you do as I would have you?"

"I make no blind bargains," said Cluny; "and I must have security for such a promise; for I know your present means are not great, whatever they may be hereafter."

"Well, you shall have all you ask," replied Morgan. "You have before now, Thomas Cluny, conducted some dark affairs with certain members of the Star Chamber, acting as a go-between with them and Friar John."

"What is that to the purpose?" inquired Cluny.

"Why, you must enter upon a new negotiation," said Morgan. "I am quite certain, this business about the conspiracy will come to nothing. And you know that the use we intended to make of the Wyatt Correspondence was chiefly to give an air of probability to Edward Wilford's being concerned in this new plot. For, as Edward never took up arms with Wyatt, those letters, of themselves, would not be sufficient to hang him."

"But they are sufficient to procure a writ of detainer from the Star Chamber, if Sir Richard should ultimately dismiss the Dover business for want of proper evidence. I fancy, that is what you are driving at, Sir Francis."

"You have exactly guessed my meaning, most sagacious Cluny," said Sir Francis. "If we can but keep the fellow in gaol, I do not at all despair, by your assistance, and that of Friar John, to rake up some matter against him, to get him executed even yet. You can be an industrious attorney, if you like it, Cluny. Evidence may be found, though Jemmy Jenkyns has escaped. There are accommodating people in this world, who will remember things that may be useful at a

proper time, on receiving a compensation for the trouble of brushing up their memory."

"Sir Francis Morgan," said Cluny, "there needs no more words. I apprehend the whole of this matter, and what you would have me to do in it; and I will be plain with you. You are a man who understands perfectly well the fashions of a court; you may follow them. I can conceive you might make me a useful instrument. But on any unexpected discovery or so, you, if needed, to clear yourself, would sacrifice me. And so the principal escapes, whilst the agent is given up to the hangman. Your father, Judge Morgan, is a fitter person than myself to help you through this affair. He has great weight in the Star Chamber, and might procure the writ of detainer by a word."

"My father!" cried Morgan; "why have you not heard that he has run mad about some crazy notions that he took into his head concerning the affair of the Lady Jane Gray? continually fancying that he saw her ghost before his eyes, and crying out, 'Take away the Lady Jane!' My father, I tell you, can do nothing. He is as mad as a March hare."

"Then, why don't you act upon the statute of lunacy against him?" said Cluny; "you might easily come into the charge of all his property, both real and personal. And I shall most willingly offer you my services, in a legal way, to assist in managing his affairs."

"I dare say you would," replied Morgan; "but I have too much business on my hands just now to attend to any other matters; and so my father must rave on till I can find leisure to look after him. I dare say he will rave himself to the devil fast enough without my assistance; for he is desperately bad, I do assure you."

"It is rather unlucky for you," said Cluny, "that he should have gone mad before he procured this writ from the Star Chamber. And I must say the business is a ticklish one, and that I do not much like to meddle with it."

"What! not for a thousand marks?" exclaimed Sir Francis; "why, I thought you would have run to the Evil One himself to get a writ of detainer for half that sum; come, think better of it. And as for the evidence you may chance to muster, I will promise you five angels per head for every witness you procure; and Sam Collins here shall be my warrant that I stand to the bargain."

"Excuse me," replied Cluny; "I have a very particular respect for you, Sir Francis Morgan, and a sufficient respect

for the merits of Master Samuel Collins; but in a matter where my neck must run some hazard of a hempen collar, I neither trust to your promise nor to that of Master Collins. If you fail, you may make me scape-goat; throw all the blame on me, and get clear off yourselves."

"Why do you take me for such a rascal as to act in that manner by you, Lawyer Cluny?" said Morgan indignantly.

"Pardon me, Sir Francis!" cried Cluny, "I do not pretend to take you for anything. I only wish to take you for what you are, not for what you may be. You are a young gentleman who loves life, pleasure, and money—these are dear things to part with; and rather than betray them in your own person, if it came to the question, you might, perhaps, in mine. I will do nothing without a written agreement, witnessed by Master Collins, which will make him a party concerned, stating all you would have done respecting the writ of detainer, and the evidence, as well as the promise of a thousand marks. Then you dare not betray me, nor dare Master Collins do it either; since, happen what may, if you betrayed me, you would both swing for the same business yourselves."

"You will not do what I want without such a paper?" said Morgan.

"I will not, that is positive," answered Cluny; "no, though you offered me ten thousand marks instead of one."

"You are a devil, a most cunning devil, after all, Cluny:" said Morgan. "But I am so beset in your toils, and in those of Friar John, that I cannot choose. But remember this one point, Cluny: when the business is done, you must give me back the paper you require of me now; I will not trust it in your hands after you receive the payment of the money."

"I consent to that; the demand is strictly equitable," replied Cluny; "and more than that, when the said sum of one thousand marks is safe in my possession, the paper shall be burnt before your eyes."

"It shall," cried Morgan; "the thing is a bargain. Draw out the deed, and I will sign it, and Sam Collins shall put his hand as a witness to it. You will then instantly set to work?"

"I will," answered Cluny; "and when I have procured the writ of detainer, I will hold it ready to serve it upon Edward Wilford, the moment Sir Richard Southwell sets him free from prison, in case such should be his ultimate determination."

Cluny then drew up the paper, and Sir Francis Morgan, who was often heedless even in villany, instantly signed it.

Cluny next desired Collins to put his hand as a witness to the instrument. Collins objected: "The business is none of mine," said he, "and why am I to be mixed up in such an affair as this is? I don't mind doing a good turn for Sir Francis Morgan, by taking an oath or so as a witness, when I can be useful to him; or by standing to a round dozen of lies, to give him a help in a friendly way; but when you come to black and white, that is quite a different thing. I don't like it at all, for it always ends in making or marring; so I won't sign that paper."

"You will not sign that paper, when I command it, Sammy?" said Morgan. "Why, you beggarly rascal! if I ordered you to sign your own death-warrant, you ought to do it without a word. Have not I taken you up, rogue as you are, out of the dirt, from the very scum of the cock-pit, and made you to be the companion of a gentleman? You ungrateful scoundrel! sign that paper this moment, or you shall feel my sword over your back."

Collins grumbled, but, used to servility and submission, he did put his name as a witness to the instrument; and soon after, he and Morgan departed, leaving Cluny to commence his negotiation about procuring the writ of detainer, etc. in order that a fresh attack might be commenced against Edward Wilford, seeing that the nicely concerted discovery of their pretended conspiracy was like to come to nothing.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE nineteenth day of November had been appointed by the Commissioners for the execution of that cruel sentence which they had passed on Owen Wilford, and the other unhappy Protestants destined to perish in the flames. By a system of wanton cruelty, common in those fearful times, they had also appointed that Alice was to do her penance on the same day, and that she was to parade from the church to the public cross in Canterbury, barefooted, through the market-place, at an hour when, by such an arrangement, she must necessarily witness the burning of her husband.

Alice received the intelligence with more composure than Rose had expected; for her miserable mother felt so assured that her own life was drawing to its close, that the very consciousness of so desired a termination of her afflictions, appeared to afford her a comfort she had hitherto derived from no other consideration. Owen Wilford received the information of his appointed time with the firmness of a man, and the humility of a Christian. Casting aside all worldly hopes and fears, even, as much as possible, the feelings of natural affection, he gave up his soul to God, in fervent prayer and devout meditation, that he might be ready, as a faithful and chosen servant, to die with unbending confidence—with that exalted trust in the mercy of his Maker, so glorious to the cause for which he gave his life; a confidence that could alone confer upon the sufferer of a death so awful, the noble name of a martyr.

During the latter part of his confinement, he had some few interviews with his son Edward, and with his daughter Rose. In all these interviews he preserved a collectedness, and a composure of mind, that could alone be the result of that support, so strongly and evidently afforded by God himself to His persecuted people. Owen talked to his children, even of their temporal affairs, with the same prudence, kindness, and honesty, as he had done in the happiest hours of his life; and joined them in prayer to Almighty God, with a piety and fervour which appeared to raise him far above that world he was so soon to quit for ever.

Since his condemnation, Owen had been a prisoner under

the charge of the Mayor of Canterbury; and he found in this civil officer a sympathy and indulgence wholly different from the conduct and wanton cruelty of Thornton and Harpsfield. He was allowed to have a room in the keeper's apartments during the day, where, on the evening previous to that destined for his sufferings, he supped, in company with the Mayor, his own son Edward, and one or two other persons who had taken a sincere interest in his fate.

On this evening, Edward Wilford was deeply affected, so as to be nearly incapable of supporting the conversation which his father addressed to him with so much composure; and he now declared to Owen, that he should have no relish for the liberty he had been given to understand he was to receive on the morrow: the person who had charged him as a party concerned in the Dover conspiracy having absconded, no real ground of accusation could be maintained, and to this he owed the promise of his liberation.

Owen Wilford returned thanks most devoutly at hearing his son was likely to be so soon set free, and he counselled him to take the first opportunity that should offer, to leave the kingdom for Frankfort, in company with his mother and sister; as there was a friend who had promised Owen, on parting with him for ever, that his family should be supplied with the present means of exiling themselves from the dangers which surrounded them in their native country. Edward promised to fulfil his father's commands; and soon after they parted, with a solemnity and resignation that deeply affected every one present on this melancholy occasion.

Notwithstanding the indulgence of the Mayor, Owen Wilford was obliged by the laws under which he was to suffer, to pass the night in his ordinary cell, strongly secured by bars and bolts of iron. When he retired to it, he begged the indulgence of a lamp, as he said that he purposed to pass the night previous to his death, in reading and devotion; having recovered the Bible that was taken from him by the kindness of his new keeper.

For some time, Owen consoled and fortified his mind by reading such chapters and portions of the Sacred volume as were applicable to his condition; and whilst he read that sublime chapter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, on the Resurrection of the Dead, he was so exalted by the lively and noble images of a final victory over death, that he rose from his seat, raised his eyes, and exclaimed, "I thank thee, O my God! that even by this fiery trial I shall be made incorruptible.

Accept the sacrifice of my body, and shew mercy to my soul." He then threw himself upon his knees, and long and fervently did he pray for support in the approaching hour of his sufferings. He prayed also for his wife, his children, his country, and lastly, for his enemies; till, spent by the fervour of his feelings and the great exertions he had made during the whole of the day, at length he sunk down upon his straw; and Providence, who ever watches over His afflicted and faithful servants, afforded him the relief, in a calm and profound sleep, which was so necessary to the infirmities of his body and the sorrows of his mind.

So sound indeed were the slumbers of Owen Wilford, on this most memorable night, that he was not awakened from them by the harsh grating of his prison-door, as some one, about an hour after, opened it upon him, and gently stole into his dungeon. The man who entered was wrapped in a large cloak, and wore upon his head a broad and black hat, which shaded his features. He stood gazing with mingled feelings of surprise and sympathy, as he contemplated the Protestant lying in tranquil slumbers upon his bed of straw. The countenance of the venerable Owen Wilford looked composed, though emaciated; and his present quiet state, compared with the horrors, the excruciating agonies, he was destined to suffer on the morrow, so forcibly presented itself in contrast to the mind of his midnight visitor, that a deep sigh burst from his bosom, as he stood with clasped hands, looking upon the sleeping man, and exclaimed, "Wilford! Wilford! awake and speak to me!"

Owen, thus suddenly disturbed from rest, started, and opening his eyes, at first gazed about him in a confused manner; at length, he fixed his attention upon the stranger. The latter threw his hat upon the ground, and the light of the lamp now distinctly shewed his features to the prisoner, who instantly exclaimed aloud, "Southwell!"

"Ay, it is Southwell, Owen," replied the visitor; "your earliest, once your dearest friend. Good God! do we meet, must we part here?"

"You are come to me at last, then," said Wilford; "this is kind, and I have the melancholy satisfaction to see you once more before we part for ever: our opinions parted us in life; but the bond of charity, I trust, will unite us in death. It is some relief to my mind to see that you feel for me."

"That I feel for you!" cried Southwell; "my heart, my very soul bleeds for you. Oh, Wilford! why have we ever been

parted in life? Had you but remained what you once were, our friendship had never known decay, our children might have been happy, and I should not now have to lament, that the son of my earliest, my dearest friend, has caused the disobedience, and I fear, the sorrow, of my daughter."

"My son is good, honourable, and brave," said Owen; "I must, therefore, think you are deceived, since he could not act, as you say he has acted, basely, being such as I know him to be in mind."

"It is not my purpose," replied Sir Richard, "to come here to embitter the last hours of your life with any reproaches about your son. He has injured me, but I forgive him; and I hope that I have done him justice. To-morrow morning he will be set at liberty."

"Thank God!" cried Owen; "then he will follow me to the stake. I wish to leave him the example of my death, that he may be ready, should it please God to call him to the like trial of his faith. To you, Sir Richard—nay, I will not call you so,—to you my dear friend, I owe a debt of gratitude, that I can only pay with thanks and prayers. By a timely interference you have saved my poor Rose from perishing by neglect in a dungeon; you have shewn mercy and justice to my son; you have done what you had the power to do for my dear wife;—how can I ever bless you enough for these generous acts to a family the doctrines of whose creed you hold accursed?"

"Do not talk of gratitude to me," said Sir Richard. "Remember how I am bound to you. Thirty years have passed away; but the remembrance, that I owe to you both life and happiness, has not passed away, and never will, to the last moments of my existence."

"I remember that I acted as it became me," replied Owen; "and you have now repaid the services I did you, by a tenfold obligation."

"Oh, let me do more!" said Sir Richard; "let me try to save you. I have a heart capable of friendship, capable of gratitude. And how can I endure the thought that Owen Wilford, who in the prime of manhood, to render me and another happy, generously gave up to me the object of his first affection, my dear, my deceased wife,—that Owen, who, at the peril of his life, when I was by accident cast into the Rhine,—struggled with the rapid flood, and saved me from a watery grave, must himself perish miserably?—Must I now live to see the man to whom I am thus bound, perish by fire?" Sir Richard burst into tears, and covered his face with his

hands, as Owen stood before him, melted into sorrow by the feelings which these recollections of early times had aroused within his breast.

"You shall not die;—I must, I will save you!" continued Sir Richard: "you shall not cast away a life so dear, that might be made so noble, would you but listen to the truth."

"I have listened to truth," said Wilford, "and I shall seal the witness of it with my blood."

"Oh, do not say so," cried his friend; "this is worse than all! If you die thus, you are lost for ever. Think, think how dreadful is the eternal wrath of heaven. Who shall abide the everlasting burnings?"

"If the spirit of Christianity were like the spirit of your Church," replied Wilford, "those fires would be terrible indeed. But know, Southwell, that Providence, who gave us life and being, delights in mercy. Read, examine His truth, as I have done, and you will find that the penitent Christian need not expire in despair."

"Can nothing move you to renounce these errors?" said Southwell.

"Nothing," replied Wilford: "here is my Rock! (and he put his hand on his Bible as he spoke)—and here will I cling for support, as the waters of strife rage around me. They may rage, but they shall never overwhelm that rock of my refuge and my hope."

"Think upon your wife," said Sir Richard; "upon your children! You have a daughter, whose mind would render her the glory of her kind, but for one fatal error—the same that drags you to the stake. Live! and should God touch your heart, and dispel this darkness that shrouds the nobler qualities of your soul, even as the night veils every beauty of creation, you may save her from perdition."

"Rather say, could I do so," answered Wilford, "that I should lead her to it. Southwell, you have a generous sympathy, which I have rarely seen in one of your persuasion, for the unhappy members of our Church. You lament my case; and I grieve to see a heart so good as yours by nature, a charity so universal, thus prejudiced and narrowed by the bigotry of a faith wholly unworthy of you. We can never agree in our opinions; let us, therefore, no longer urge them. I thank you for the kindness of the intention; but my time is short—let me beg of you one favour, and then I would beseech you to leave me to God. In this world we part for ever."

"Ay, for ever indeed!" said Southwell; "for your faith and mine must sunder us here and hereafter!"

"I would beseech you, Sir Richard," continued Wilford, "as you have so much influence in this county, that you would use it to assist my unhappy family after my death, that they may depart in peace, and become exiles in a land which offers them safety to their lives. If they stay here, sooner or later, they will perish at the stake; and I know you are not a friend to these persecutions, though they are instituted by your own Church."

"I will do what you ask of me," replied Sir Richard. "They shall depart in safety, and I will see that they do not depart in want. Now, then, we part for ever; you will not let me save you?"

"You could not save me," said Wilford, "unless I laid upon my soul the guilt of perjury. You will witness my death?"

"No," said Southwell; "that I can never do. It is my duty, as sheriff of the county, to be present at the execution of the dreadful sentence passed upon you; but I could not see you die—and such a death! Sir John Baker will act, by my authority, as my deputy on this dreadful occasion. Is there aught else you would ask of me?"

"No; nothing more than I have already asked," replied Owen. "I thank you for all your kind acts to me and mine."

"We differ in faith," said Southwell; "but I abhor persecution. Had there been but a chance that I could have saved you, I would have thrown myself at the feet of the queen, and implored mercy for your life, as I would for my own; but she is inflexible. It may be necessary, but it is terrible. Wilford! the remembrance of this hour will embitter my cup of life to the last dregs, when I shall think how we parted, and for ever!" Sir Richard grasped the hand of his friend as he spoke, whilst the tears, that he did not attempt to restrain, flowed fast down his cheeks. He embraced Owen again and again, and made a last and desperate attempt to procure his recantation; till, finding all his efforts hopeless, overcome by sorrow, affection, and pity, he wrung Wilford by the hand, and said—"Farewell for ever! and, if it can be so, may God have mercy on you!"

"And on you," replied Wilford; "may He bless and reward you for all the many worthy acts of your life; may your errors be forgiven! Farewell, farewell!"

Sir Richard tore himself from the prisoner, and, in a state of mind the most distressing, returned to his own house at Wellminster.

CHAPTER XXIV

It now becomes necessary that we should revert to some circumstances which occurred, both previous to, and during the painful events, it has been our task to record in the last three chapters. The reader will remember the artful means by which Friar John induced Sir Richard Southwell to make a solemn promise that he would not see his daughter Arabella till the day should arrive on which she was to be given as the wife of Morgan; he will also remember that, till the day so appointed might arrive, the Friar was to be the sole director and counsellor of Arabella.

The first thing he did, after having extorted a consent to his plan from her father, was to forbid her having any communication with the faithful old housekeeper, Mistress Deborah; whilst a furious Catholic bigot, a woman at once artful and ill-natured, was substituted by the Friar as the particular attendant of the young lady; and so much did Arabella abhor the manners and conversation of this woman, that for days together she would shut herself up in her own chamber, where she beguiled many of her solitary and wretched hours, in turning her thoughts to the contents of the little cabinet bequeathed to her by her mother, and which had been removed into her chamber (unknown either to Sir Richard or the Friar) by Lady Southwell's orders before her death.

Arabella diligently perused "Tindal's Christian Obedience," and all the other good books which had been selected for her by her deceased parent. For a time, she led a life of tolerable tranquillity; though at certain hours each day she was compelled to leave her chamber to give attendance on the Friar: since she was informed it was her father's will, as a daughter she dared not disobey it. By the management of the Friar, Sir Francis Morgan was sometimes present at these interviews,—a circumstance peculiarly painful to Arabella, but she was obliged to submit. Thus far we can with confidence relate the particulars of the Friar's conduct towards this unhappy lady; but there are parts of it wholly unknown to us, and of which we only speak by conjecture; for Friar John was too artful to leave any document of his worst schemes; and the destruction and misery he caused by his influence, might not inaptly be compared to the power of lightning in its most fatal flash. It was often sudden, rapid, deadly, and yet left no trace behind it of its course, except the withering and blackened ruin it had caused.

By what positive means the Friar now acted on the mind of Arabella, it is beyond our ability to state; but, whatever were those means, they were fearful and effective, and most probably had been increased during the latter part of the time in which she was under his rule, since the miserable girl became so hopelessly wretched, that she could no longer compose her mind to consult the contents of the little cabinet in her solitary hours. And, indeed, few solitary hours were now allowed her by her ghostly persecutor, as he insisted that her female tormentor should be constantly with her, and should even sleep in her apartment at night. Indeed (though we cannot positively affirm it, yet such a suspicion is not wholly without foundation), it has been said, that the Friar carried his villany so far, as to cause to be administered to the unhappy Arabella certain powerful drugs, that were supposed to act upon the feelings, and certainly did affect the senses, being calculated to stupify and bewilder the brain.

This part of our narrative is involved in great mystery; and in stating these particulars, we rather detail things rendered probable by the known character of the Friar, than from the evidence of positive facts. One thing, however, is certain, that he completely succeeded in breaking the spirit, and in bowing down before him the mind of Arabella, so that he wrung from her a consent to become the wife of Sir Francis Morgan. The reader will be startled at hearing this, and perhaps may ask, could it be possible? We answer, that if he should read the Life of Cranmer, as given by the most authentic authors, he will there see the infamous means and the arts by which Friar John de Villa Garcina became a very principal agent in procuring the recantation of that pillar of the Reformed Church; and having seen this, he will no longer be surprised to find that a man who could, though but for a time, subdue such a mind as Cranmer's, should succeed in overpowering the understanding of a young and timid woman.

Such was the state of the wretched Arabella, when Friar John, apprehending that the single fact of Jenkyns' having absconded, might produce a complete exposure of Sir Francis Morgan, determined to prevent it, by securing to Morgan the interest of Sir Richard Southwell in the marriage of his daughter. Morgan once becoming the husband of Arabella, the Friar thought, would be a circumstance that must for ever silence both the scruples and inquisitiveness of her father, relative to the conduct of his son-in-law. Then all would be safe, whatever might come out hereafter.

We have before stated the vile and interested motives that made the Friar so warmly advocate the cause of Morgan. In addition to which, his own personal safety now made him eager for the marriage. Villains never feel a confidence in each other. The Friar and Sir Francis had acted in concert in many of those dark and nefarious plots and schemes that disgrace the annals of English history during the arbitrary reign of Queen Mary. If, therefore, by means of Jenkyns, (and the officers of justice were on the alert to apprehend him), Morgan's plot to involve and destroy Edward Wilford should be discovered before he was the husband of Arabella, John rightly apprehended Sir Richard would bring the whole affair into a legal court, where, possibly, Morgan, to save himself, might impeach the Friar. The toils of villany are like the web of the spider; there is no end to their intricacies. There was but one way left for safety, and that the Friar determined should be instantly adopted. No time was to be lost; a day, nay, even an hour (if Jenkyns were taken) might ruin all. And to avoid this ruin, he now set to work with the utmost activity.

The Friar, accordingly, appointed the very day destined for the burning of the Protestants, as that on which Sir Francis Morgan was to lead to the altar Arabella. And as John, by virtue of his office as a Commissioner, must be present at the execution (Sir Richard having determined not to witness it), he appointed a priest of his own choosing to perform the ceremony of marriage. He resolved, therefore, to introduce Arabella to the presence of her father at an early hour, when Morgan and the priest should also be in attendance; so that, at the very moment the Friar set off to witness the execution at Canterbury, these parties should set forward to the little private chapel at Wellminster Hall, in order to solemnize the nuptials.

Having thus made the reader acquainted with the previous circumstances, we now take up our narrative on the morning of the nineteenth of November,—a day destined by tyranny, bigotry, and cunning, to give an old man and three other Protestants to the stake, and the daughter of a Roman Catholic to be sacrificed at the altar. On that dreadful morning, Arabella was arrayed by her female tormentor in a dress of the purest white, ornamented by a few jewels of considerable value. She submitted to being thus arrayed like one who was almost unconscious of what was being done to her. The attentions of her tiring woman might be compared to the task observed by a hardened attendant upon the dead, who decks out the senseless corpse in its shroud of white and

scatters flowers upon the dust. Like a corpse, indeed, was the countenance of Arabella; but there was a restlessness, a bright sparkling and a wildness about her eye, that did not indicate a perfect possession of her senses.

When the business of tiring was completed, the woman proceeded (according to the usual custom) to wish her joy on her happiness. Whoever has received in the course of their lives the congratulations of joy when their heart has been sinking under the dead burthen of secret sorrow, may possibly conceive in what manner such congratulations fall upon the ear, whilst the soul sickens at the thought. It seemed as if this compliment struck, like the steel upon the flint, on the mind of Arabella, and aroused her, by a single spark, from the torpor of her feelings; for she suddenly raised her hands, and exclaimed aloud, "Joy to me! Do not mock me. I know nothing but despair!" And rushing forward, she pushed aside the woman with great violence, who endeavoured to intercept her passage to the door, passed the long gallery like an arrow in its flight, descended the stairs, burst open the entrance of the chamber where her father was awaiting the arrival of the Friar, and ran at once into his arms.

Arabella now wept, sobbed, looked around, and seeing no one present but Sir Richard, she said in a hurried manner, "Don't let them come in! Don't let them part us again! They have not killed me, but they have driven me mad. But you will save me; are you not my father? or is Friar John my father? Who is it that is to make me a merry bride in these fine trappings?"—and she burst into a wild and hysterical laugh.

"Great God!" exclaimed Sir Richard, "she is beside herself. Arabella! look at me," he continued: "Do you know me? How her eye wanders! Do you know me, Arabella? I am your father."

"No, that you are not!" said Arabella distractedly;—"my father was a good man, and he would never give up his child to such wretches. But I am not mad; only look at me,—see how gay I am! I could dance on a grave if it lay at my feet, so that I thought it was my own."

"She has lost her senses!" cried Sir Richard. "How cruelly, how madly have I acted in thus giving up my only child to the rule of another, to such a tyrant as the Friar. But he shall dearly answer this. Oh! my poor, my dear, my lost child! look at your father. Look upon him; know him as your father. You shall not wed Morgan; only be calm, be composed. Do but return to reason. You shall not wed Morgan; I swear, you shall not."

"Oh, yes, yes! but I must," said Arabella; "I will, if the Friar orders me. He is a fearful man! My head is very light; they would make me drink last night, though I told them that I was not thirsty. If I had a father, he would have snatched away the cup; he would have taken my part. But my father is dead, dead, dead; and so they torture his child, and make her dress herself fine, and do what they list; yet it is no matter, she has a merry heart and a full one, for a coffin and the worms."

"This is insupportable!" exclaimed Sir Richard. "She must have instant aid. Help, there! who waits? Bring instant help!" And he left Arabella for a moment, and ran to procure for her some assistance. On hearing the voice of Southwell, Friar John hastily entered the apartment. Sir Richard burst into a torrent of reproaches, with which he overwhelmed his infamous confessor. But when the Friar fixed his eye stedfastly on Arabella, her manner instantly changed. She seemed to be withered by his very look, and stood immovable. Every limb trembled, like a leaf before the deadly blight, and not a word escaped her lips; she was as quiet and as passive as a lamb that is to be led to the sacrifice.

"You have driven my child to madness!" said Sir Richard; "yes, you have done this. You made me vow not to see her, not to hear her, but to resign her to your management, your care; and see how you have used her! You have tyrannised over her feelings, tortured every finer sensation of her mind, and never left your cruel purpose till her reason was destroyed—"

"Hear me, I beseech you, Sir Richard," said the Friar, interrupting him, and evidently perplexed at this unexpected rupture; "I will prove to you, that all I have done has been alone to save her. I am sorry you should force me to say so by your unjust reproaches, but her present conduct is but artifice; I beseech you to hear my vindication."

"I will not hear you!" replied Sir Richard, with the utmost warmth. "Artifice! look at her wan cheek, her wild and disordered glance; see her trembling limbs, and her spirit broken and distracted—I will no longer endure this. Leave my sight! I do suspect that you have practised some wicked and accursed arts upon my child. You have dealt darkly and unjustly in this matter, I do suspect it, for some vile purpose of your own."

"I could have no purpose," said the Friar; "I—"

"I will hear no more!" exclaimed Sir Richard; "this dreadful hour has flashed conviction on my mind, and I will have full satisfaction: your accusation of one man, whom I

now believe to be entirely innocent, has fallen to the ground, though you most artfully urged me to deal foully by him. The man upon whose evidence you so much insisted has absconded; I will search out the truth hereafter; and if you have, as I suspect, played the villain's part—a thing, which the very condition of this dear child renders more than probable—be sure of it, you shall answer for the offence before a tribunal of justice in this world, and before a still more awful tribunal hereafter. Leave me!"

"I will leave you, Sir Richard," replied Friar John haughtily; "but look to yourself, and do not dare to threaten me. I answer to your accusations! you shall first answer to mine. You have shamefully and openly become the supporter and partizan of heretics. Dare but to move one step to injure me, and I will cite you to answer for this conduct before the Queen and Council; even Rome itself shall hear my complaint. Mark my words, and tremble; you are ruined, if I but point you out to justice." The insolent and haughty Friar, seeing that his scheme to marry Arabella to Sir Francis Morgan was wholly frustated by his having overstrained the bow in attempting to bend it, instantly left the house, for the double purpose of communicating this intelligence to Morgan, and of attending the execution of Owen Wilford—a sight that promised to satisfy the savage spirit of malice and revenge which he cherished towards that unoffending and persecuted man.

To describe the state of Sir Richard Southwell's feelings would be impossible; he was like a madman. He reproached himself, in all the agony of remorse, heightened by parental affection, for having given up Arabella to the management of the Friar; he ran to and fro to procure for her what assistance he could. Deborah was summoned instantly to take care of her, and a messenger sent off express to Canterbury, who was charged not to return till he had procured the attendance of the most skilful men of the faculty in that city.

Sir Richard then caused Arabella to be gently removed back to her apartment, where she was immediately put to bed; for it seemed, by the distracted account which she gave of herself, that she had not found any sleep or repose during the night preceding her expected marriage.

Deborah was half frantic with rage at learning these things; and encouraged to act boldly by the anger expressed by Sir Richard against the Friar, she took upon herself the office of turning out, neck and shoulders, the unfeeling woman whom Friar John had placed about her young mistress. Sir Richard scrupled not to blame himself as the author of all this misery,

by having been prevailed with to resign his rights, as a father, to another. His self-reproaches made him humble, so that he actually bore with quietness and submission those twits and angry taunts which Mistress Deborah, from time to time, threw out against him—a liberty that, for the moment, placed the master in the situation of an inferior before his own servant.

But Sir Richard freely forgave this liberty in the old housekeeper, and could have forgiven her much more, in consideration of the tenderness, care, and unremitting attention she paid to his poor bewildered daughter—placing herself by the bed-side, and vowing she would never quit it till her dear young lady was restored, or till she should die with her. This dreadful scene had one particular effect on the mind of Southwell, which, perhaps, no other circumstance in the world could produce; since he entertained so great a horror for the conduct of Friar John, that he now thought that man worse in the sight of God, than were even the heretics who, on this fatal morning, were destined to die at the stake. Yet, in the midst of all his distraction on account of Arabella, Sir Richard remembered that Owen Wilford was to suffer, with a sorrow which, combined with his present distress, of mind, made him sick of life itself.

The medical men who had been sent for, soon arrived from Canterbury. They were instantly conducted into the apartment of their patient, whilst Sir Richard, who waited to learn their decision in a small ante-room, might be justly compared to the criminal, who attends in silent and awful suspense the decision of his jury for life or death.

Doctors, in the reign of queen Mary, were quite as mysterious and prolix as they are sometimes found to be in the present age. The two members of the learned faculty, who now entered the little ante-room to make their report to the agonised father, began first by shaking their heads; and secondly, by positively contradicting each other; since one maintained that she would live, and his companion that she must die; each recommending a totally different mode of treatment, as absolutely necessary to secure the only probable chance of life. Sir Richard Southwell was now most truly an object of pity: he was just as ignorant of the real state of his beloved child's case, as he was before the arrival of the doctors. Indeed, he was in a worse condition—since, distracted by the contradiction and variety of their opinions, he knew not which of their directions to follow.

In this emergency, the plain sense of Mistress Deborah helped him through the difficulty; for she held for the doctor

who had declared perfect quiet, and a composed sleep, if it could be procured, as above all things necessary for the recovery of his patient. And, as wrangling so near the sick chamber was not the way to procure either, the housekeeper very civilly opened the door, and turned both the doctors down stairs; telling them, the oak parlour was quite at liberty, and that, if they disputed there all the day long, it could not be heard above-stairs. A composing medicine, however, was instantly administered to the sufferer. Deborah took her station on one side the bed, and Sir Richard Southwell on the other; whilst Arabella lay, like a corpse, with her eyes fixed and open, breathing short and heavy, her hands and temples burning with heat, and her mind as wandering and distracted as it had been in the morning.

Sir Richard watched, wept, prayed, and wiped the tears from his eyes by turns, and resolutely refused to leave the chamber of his beloved child, even for an instant, to take the least refreshment or repose. At length a domestic stole into the room without shoes, for fear of making the least noise, and beckoned to Mistress Deborah. She glided softly to the door, heard what the servant had to say in a whisper, and immediately motioned to Sir Richard to advance. He likewise stole to the door, as Deborah glided back again to her station by the bed-side.

The domestic put a packet into the hands of his master; Sir Richard looked at the seal, and, without farther inquiry, instantly quitted the sick-chamber. He descended to his closet, hastily opened the packet, and read the contents. No sooner had he done so, than he rushed to the door, where the domestic was still waiting in attendance. "Does the person who brought this yet remain below?" said Southwell.

"He does," was the answer.

"Get me a horse this moment," cried Sir Richard. "Away! no delay."

He was obeyed; in a few minutes the animal was brought to the hall-door. Sir Richard mounted, dashed the spur up to the rowel head into its sides, and rode off, as if for life or death, attended by the person who had brought to him the sealed packet.

Deborah heard the trampling of horses' feet in the court-yard; she stole to the window, and thought within herself, as she saw Southwell depart with so much speed, "What can this be, that could take Sir Richard from his darling child, at a moment when that child, perhaps, lies on the bed of death?"

CHAPTER XXV

EARLY upon the morning of the nineteenth day of November, Owen Wilford was brought out of his cell into the keeper's apartment, in order to prepare him to set forward on his way to the place of execution. Here he was speedily joined by his son Edward, who entered the room with a countenance that bespoke the despair of his mind. He could not speak to his father; he wrung his hand in silence, walked to the window, wiped away the tears from his eyes, came forward, and then looking Owen in the face, burst out into an agony of grief.

At this moment the door opened, and Rose (who had obtained permission) came in. She looked very pale, and her arm still rested in the sling. She was wrapped in a large cloak of black silk, her head covered only with her handkerchief, bound about the temples. She entered the room with a firm step, and in her whole demeanour there was an air of quiet submission, a firmness of purpose, in the few but expressive words which she addressed to the keeper, who stood near the door, that, to a common observer, might have appeared as the result of a want of feeling, rather than the effort of a high mind, which resolves to hold feeling in subjection, from some great and generous motive.

On seeing the passionate sorrow of her brother, Rose went up to him, and took him by the hand; at the same time glancing her eye towards their father, she seemed to say, "Spare him the sight of this;" and then leading her brother to Owen, they both fell down before him on their knees, as Rose exclaimed, "My dearest father! bless your children."

Owen laid a hand upon the head of each, and in a manner deeply impressive, implored Almighty God to bless them in this life, and to consummate that blessing in the life to come. He then tenderly embraced his children, whilst they were melted into tears. But a still more painful trial was reserved for him, when his miserable wife entered the apartment, arrayed for the shocking spectacle of that penance which she was this day to perform. She was bare-footed, though sinking under age and sickness; and her body was covered with a white sheet, that hung like a shroud upon her back. Alice

was also to bear a lighted taper in one hand, and a fagot in the other; and in this manner she was to be paraded from the prison to the church, through the streets of Canterbury.

At the sight of his wife in such a deplorable condition, the firmness and patience of Owen for a moment forsook him. He clasped her in his arms, and weeping bitterly, called upon God to become her deliverer. Alice was so wholly subdued at the thought of the dreadful approaching death of her husband that the few words she uttered, broken and unconnected, could scarcely be understood.

"My mother," said Rose, "to walk barefooted through Canterbury in this condition! She can never support it. It will be her death. Who ordered this?"

"The Suffragan Bishop of Dover," replied the keeper.

"Then, I beseech you," said Rose, "let me give her my shoes. I know Sir Richard Southwell, and I will take upon me to say, that if you will but suffer this indulgence to be shewn to my poor mother, Sir Richard will take care that no harm shall come to you from it."

"Without awaiting the keeper's reply, Rose instantly gave her own shoes to her mother, and herself remained barefooted. "I do not mind it," she said; "I have known a greater pain than that of walking upon the hard stones. And what are the sufferings of my body this day, when compared to those of my mind?"

"You are a good, considerate child," said Owen, "and God will reward you, Rose, for every act of duty to your mother. —Now, Alice; now, my children; remember, this is the moment to try your trust in God. Be firm: recollect the promise, and bow down in silence before the inscrutable will of Heaven. Join with me in prayer.—And will you, Master Keeper, suffer my fellow-prisoners, who are this day to die with me, to come hither, that they may unite their petitions with ours to the Father of Mercy?"

The keeper gave orders that this request should be granted; and the first person who, soon after, entered the apartment, was old Abel Allen. He came clad in a shroud, a dress often worn by those who were going to the stake; and upon his head appeared that very red worsted nightcap which had been sent to him in prison by his own desire. Abel leaned upon a staff, and the furrows of his aged cheek were rendered yet more deep by the hardships he had suffered in the Castle. He stopped facing his old master, looked at him affectionately, shook his head, and then wiping his eyes with the back of his

hand, he said, "I did not think ever to cry again in this world. I had made up my mind to be a man, that the scoundrel Friar and mass-singing Thornton should not see that they could overcome the heart of old Abel Allen, as they have done his body, in a prison; but I can't hold to it when I see my dear master;—God bless you, dear Master Owen! I was ten years old when you were born. I was then in the service of your honour's father, and I didn't think I should live to see you come to this end. But I'm glad I shan't live to see it, though I am not worthy to die at the same stake with you."

"You are more worthy than I am, Abel," replied Owen Wilford; "seeing that a poor man like yourself, who, without having been so well instructed in the Truth as I have been, is willing to die as a witness of it, must be of great acceptance in the sight of God. I hope, Abel, we shall, ere this day be spent, meet in a happier place than where we part."

"I can't part—I can't say good-bye to my old master," continued Allen; "I could not say so to my dog; how far less then to you?" And the good old servant wept like a child as he spoke.

"God will wipe away the tears from all eyes!" exclaimed a person who entered the room just as Allen finished the last sentence. Owen looked up, and saw Gammer Plaise, as she advanced, neatly and carefully apparelled, her whole dress being covered with a white shroud. She was followed by Tommy, who held her fast by the hand. Every one seemed surprised; for Gammer Plaise, who had hitherto appeared as if bent almost double with age, this day stood upright, her eye sparkling, her countenance full of animation, and with so much dignity of mind, that it gave even a commanding air to the person of an old, poor, and infirm woman.

"Miriam danced and played upon the harp, and rejoiced in the name of the Lord," said Gammer Plaise; "and so will I go before the stake, singing songs of gladness, and worshipping, and glorifying His name.—Who weeps? No tears, no sorrow should be ours to-day; for this is the feast of the marriage, and my wedding-garment is already on my back;" (and she pointed to the shroud that hung as a mantle over the rest of her attire); "and here is my blind child, who, though dark in this world, shall have sight in a better, for God gave to him on earth the light of His Word; and this day shall the flames that consume his body be but as a chariot of fire, to bear him on the wings of the wind to the court of the King of kings, where the scales shall fall from his eyes, as they did from

those of blind Bartimeus, and he shall see God, and know darkness no more."

"Are we to be burnt here, Granny?" said Tommy: "where are we?"

"We are still in the den of lions, my child," replied his grandmother: "but never heed it, for God will deliver thee, as He did faithful Daniel, from the rage of those fierce monsters who cry aloud to destroy thee. The fire of a multitude is kindled against a few, but it shall not prevail."

"Join with me, my fellow-sufferers," said Owen; "let us supplicate God to give us His strength in our weakness, to abide the fury of the flames; for certain am I that He will either queneh the rage of those fires, or give us, if we ask it, the strength to meet them."

The Protestant fell on his knees, his wife and children followed his example, and the sufferers condemned for heresy did the same, whilst Owen distinctly, and with a firm voice, went through a considerable portion of the morning prayers of the Reformed church. He then read aloud such parts of the Sacred Writings as were peculiarly adapted to encourage his hearers to rejoice in the endeavour to win the crown of martyrdom by the sacrifice of the body, and the sure faith of the soul; and finally, the good man concluded his pious office with delivering an extempore and emphatic prayer for support in their coming hour of tribulation. He prayed for the friends and kindred of the sufferers, and for England; invoking heaven to be pleased to remove from his people the rod of persecution that was now raised against the Church, and that the heart of the Queen might be turned to mercy and to truth; and lastly, he prayed God to preserve the Princess Elizabeth, that she might become in His hand the instrument of once more restoring the light of the Gospel to this afflicted kingdom.

Owen concluded his petition to the Divine Mercy; and on rising from the ground, he once more embraced his wife and children. To the former he spoke patience and resignation; to the latter, charity and brotherly love. Wilford then turned to the keeper of the prison, thanked him for this indulgence, and bade him a farewell. He next grasped old Abel Allen by the hand, and spoke to him many words of kindness. He did the same by Gammer Plaise, and laid his hand upon the head of poor Tommy, as he bestowed on the boy his fatherly blessing.

Rose stood near him, and, unable to restrain her tears, begged Wilford to look upon her, and that if ever in the

course of her life she had offended him, he would forgive her. Edward did the same; and Wilford answered their request with assuring them, "That, in the midst of all his afflictions, he had still to thank God for the unremitting duty of his children."

"And I hope Granny will forgive me too," said Tommy; "for I know that I used sometimes to be a naughty boy, and didn't work so hard as I ought to do to make the baskets that we sold to help to keep us.—Do, Granny, forgive me!"

"Forgive thee, my dear boy?" cried Gammer Plaise; "I have nothing to forgive thee;—kiss me, Tommy!"

The boy threw his arms round her neck, and repeatedly and affectionately kissed the withered cheek of his venerable grandmother. She fixed her eyes upon him; and, in spite of all her high feelings and resolves, nature prevailed—for some moments she could not utter a word. "A tear!" she at length said; "I did not think to shed one tear at the marriage-feast. Yet, when I look at this blind, innocent, and helpless creature, about to be murdered by the hands of cruel men, I can scarcely bear the sight. But this dear child shall be as the lamb without spot, that was sacrificed at the Passover, in remembrance of that great deliverance which God vouchsafed to His people from the bonds of the Egyptians. Even so has He in our days delivered the truth of His Word from those mighty errors of bigotry and superstition, that had so long held it in bondage. The death of His faithful servants seems necessary to confirm the witness of that truth in the sight of common men. The more innocent the victims, therefore, the more honourable is their testimony.—I will not sorrow for this child."

"Woman!" said Owen Wilford, "God is pleased to do by you as he did by the poor and despised of old, to give you that wisdom which He denies even to those who sit in the place of kings. I am astonished at hearing what I have this day heard from your lips. Let us glorify that Divine Majesty which makes His truth to be spread abroad by the lips of the unlearned and the contemned of the world, even by those of babes and sucklings.—And you, my poor boy, what are your thoughts of dying in the flame?"

"I only think," replied Tommy, sobbing, "that they are going to burn Granny. I am so sorry for her, that I don't so much mind about myself. But if I do think of myself, it is to remember what I learned in King Edward's Catechism,—that God made me, and that I belong to Him, and so He ought to

do what He likes with me; and I know that the naughty men could not burn me nor Granny either, without He lets them."

"Poor boy! it is true," said Wilford. "Many an older head could not reason thus plainly or sincerely."

"The Mayor is in attendance, Master Wilford," said the keeper, "to conduct you to the place of execution."

"I am ready," replied Owen. "I will not delay him."

The Mayor of Canterbury now entered the apartment; and, seeing the distressed state of Wilford's family, who, unable to suppress their feelings, were all weeping around him, whilst the sufferer himself exhibited a humble, composed, and pious demeanour, he was so much overcome, that instead of saluting Owen, he joined in the sympathy which filled the hearts of those around him, and could not speak for his tears. The Mayor was attended by a few of the Aldermen of Canterbury; and, to their honour be it spoken, there was not one of them but shared the general sorrow; not one but would have rejoiced, had it been possible by their interference, to spare this sacrifice of blood.

"It grieves me," said the Mayor, "that my duty obliges me—I assure you that nothing but my duty.—I hope you will pardon me my part in this day's execution. Is there any thing which I can do for you, or for these unhappy people, when you shall be no more?"

"I thank you, worthy Master Mayor," replied Wilford, "for all your kindness. I have already received much from you. I have nothing to ask for my family, since some humane friends have already undertaken to provide for them. But these poor people may have some requests to make, that I am sure, if you can, you will not deny them."

"I have but one request," said Gammer Plaise, "and it is, that you, Master Mayor, will take this paper; it tells the way in which I used to prepare the stuff to cure children of the croup, when the leeches could not help them. It may do some good when I shall be but as a withered parchment in the fire."

"I will take care of it," replied the Mayor; "it shall be well employed."

"But take heed that you do not give it to Doctor Argentine," said Gammer Plaise: "for if you do, he will sell it as dear as gold, and so the poor will get no good by it."

"I will take care of it," said the Mayor, "and give it to a humane physician that I know in this city,—one who was suddenly called off but this morning to attend the daughter

of Sir Richard Southwell, at Wellminster, who, I hear, is dying."

"Arabella dying!" exclaimed Edward Wilford. "Great God! can there be another agony in store for me, to add to all the horrors of this day!—Oh, Arabella! Arabella!—Tell me, I beseech you, is this really the case? Can she—can she be dying, and I not near her! Must I never see her more?"

"I heard only what I have told you," said the Mayor; "the physician left Canterbury even as I came hither. But I hope as far as the young lady's danger is concerned, report may have exaggerated the truth."

"And why am I spared to witness all this misery?" cried Edward Wilford; "of what worth is my life? I have been shut up in a prison, when, by liberty, I might have employed it to have done some good to my father; and now liberty is restored to me, only to witness his death,—the death of all I love on earth! Oh, that I were doomed this day to perish with you at the stake; for surely God has cast me from Him!"

"Silence, my son," said Owen; "you speak the words of despair, and this new trouble has made you forget yourself. Is your life of no value? Oh, Edward, do not embitter my last hours by saying so. Look at your poor old mother, sinking under age and calamity; look at your innocent sister, maimed and helpless, the wide world before her, with no friend to whom she can turn for help but a brother, in whose manly support she might find comfort. Think of these dear objects of your duty and affection, and do not let me believe that I must die, and leave them abandoned even by my own son."

"Pardon me, my father; forgive me, I spoke wildly. I will live:—yes, from this hour I will live only for them. I will hug the miserable chain that ties me down to life, in the hope to give them comfort. I am nothing to myself, for all hope has fled from me for ever; but I will remember the call of nature, and prove myself a son and a brother." Edward wept bitterly as he spoke; but turned to Alice and Rose, affectionately embracing them. Owen wrung his hand in silence.

The Mayor now addressed Abel Allen, and asked, if there was anything he could do for him.

"I thank your Worship," said old Abel, "there be nothing you can do for me, seeing that your Worship can neither set aside Queen Mary's way of burning people who don't think

as she would have them, nor can your Worship make the fire not to burn, and the body not to feel the flame. But I have a sister, one Widow Littlewit, and she has got a young child, too; and if you would but be so good as to give her a help now and then, to recommend her an honest lodger, it might do her good, seeing that she lives mostly by letting out her lodgings. And if your Worship would be so kind as to give her this red worsted nightcap, seeing it is the only token of remembrance that I have to send her, I shall be bound to you for the favour; and if Justice Baker should lay hands on my poor dog Pincher, for that matter about the broken pyx, I would beg your Worship to save the poor thing's life, because he can't come under the statute of heresy. And, as I shall be burnt for his offence, I hope that will satisfy Friar John."

The good-natured Mayor did promise to do all that old Abel Allen willed him, and even to take charge of the red worsted nightcap, as a token to the poor fellow's sister, Widow Littlewit, which Abel said he would pull off from his head when he was about to be fastened to the stake.—Tommy now asked, if he might be allowed to speak to Master Mayor; and on being assured he might do so freely, the boy said, "There's a thing on my mind, that your Worship, perhaps, would set at rest. I had a poor little linnet in a cage, that I used to be very fond of, and it used to sing to me; and I can't bear to think that my little linnet may be starved when I am burnt. Gaffer Turf, of Wellminster, has it now, but he is not a kind man; and I will give my bird to your Worship, cage and all, if you will take care of it, and feed it when I am dead. And you must give it fresh water and crumbs of bread every day."

The Mayor accepted Tommy's legacy with perfect good-will, and promised the boy to be kind to his linnet.

Tommy was sensibly moved by his goodness, for the child was of a very grateful disposition. And he said, "God bless your Worship! you are so kind, that I wonder Master Harpsfield and Thornton don't burn you too; for they burn Master Owen Wilford, who is just as kind as you are to poor folks."

Many other affectionate adieus passed between the sufferers and their friends. To do justice to such a scene, is far beyond the ability of our pen. In this instance, we feel something like the painter of old, who, knowing how inadequate were his powers to depict the grief of Agamemnon for the loss of his daughter, painted the father with a veil before his face. We are assured, therefore, that we shall best do our part, by

passing over in silence a scene scarcely capable of description. Leaving, then, to the imagination of the reader the last farewell between Owen, Alice, Edward, and Rose, we shall at once conduct him from the prison to the Chapel of the Holy Trinity in Canterbury Cathedral, where all the Protestants condemned to suffer were to hear a sermon preached by Thornton on their punishment; and, indeed, all the other parties abovenamed were also to attend it.

When the Mayor set forward from the prison, the melancholy procession was marshalled in the manner we shall now relate. First walked the Mayor himself, dressed in his robes of office, and bearing the keys of the city of Canterbury. He was attended by the Mace-bearer, and several Aldermen in their attire of state. Friar John de Villa Garcina, who had joined the procession just as it set out, in company with another Spanish friar, next followed, each bearing a silver cross in his hand. Owen Wilford walked between them, and after him came Gammer Plaise, still leading Tommy by the hand, with old Abel Allen by her side.

Alice next appeared, in her long white sheet, carrying in one hand a lighted taper, and in the other a fagot, her countenance of such a livid whiteness that she seemed like a spectre of the dead. Rose followed, as near as she could, the steps of her mother, her large black cloak wrapped close about her, and leaning upon the arm of her brother, in whose countenance there was so fixed an expression of despair, that a by-stander would have believed he also was going to meet his death. The procession was closed by the guard of halberts, glaives, and bills. As soon as it set forward, the Friars began to chant a Latin service, which they continued till they reached the chapel; and as these holy men entered within the door, the whole assembled choir took up the service, singing the song of Simeon, *Nunc Dimittis.*

Here the procession was joined by Harpsfield and Thornton, both arrayed in the same manner as at the trial. They now led the way into the chapel, where Sir John Baker, acting to-day as deputy for the High Sheriff of the county, had already taken his station, attended by those worthy satellites, Thomas Cluny, a rascally attorney, and Ralph Miller, a common catchpole. Sir Francis Morgan and Samuel Collins were also present.

The chapel was crowded to excess; for, besides the different members of the Romish church, the populace had thronged in, so as scarcely to leave room in the aisles for the passage of

the procession. At the sight of Owen Wilford, a man so venerable, so universally known and beloved, and who now supported by conscious rectitude, with a manner full of dignity and firmness, appeared to meet his fate, all hearts were moved; neither fear nor prejudice could silence the expression of their feelings, many wept, all were interested, and some cried out for God to bless him, as he passed along.

Old Abel Allen, Gammer Plaise, and poor little Tommy, had also their share of public sympathy; but when the death-like figure of Alice appeared to do penance for living with her own husband, a degree of indignation seemed to fill men's minds, and a murmur ran through the assembly; one or two persons present were even bold enough to cry "Shame! shame!"

A temporary platform had been erected facing the pulpit, where the prisoners were to take their stand during the sermon, so that they might be conspicuous objects in the eyes of all men present. Thornton now ascended the pulpit; he looked pale and much disordered: for, by the conduct of the populace, it was evident, though this persecution was supported by the Court and the exercise of arbitrary power, that it was not at all agreeable to the people of Canterbury.

Thornton now began his sermon, having chosen this extraordinary text: "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." This discourse he divided into three parts; shewing in the first, that the death the prisoners were about to die could profit them not at all, since they died for obstinate heresy, being entirely wanting in the only true charity to be found within the pale of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman church: he then dressed his discourse with sundry tropes and figures, full of the rhetoric of the day, likening Owen Wilford to Judas, who betrayed his Master, and the other poor sufferers to the thieves and money-changers that were driven out of the Temple. He next descanted on the virtues of the Queen, and on the clemency of the Pope, who, to save other persons from falling into the like ruinous heresies, willed, full charitably, that the examples of the death of these wicked people should be especially for their benefit and comfort. Thirdly, and lastly, Thornton directed no man to pray for them, since there was a sin, for which, in Holy Writ, it was declared, no man should pray, and that sin the Suffragan Bishop ingeniously defined to be no other than heresy against the Pope. He concluded his discourse with saying, that still, as a merciful man is merciful even to his

beast, in like manner even the guilty wretches who now stood before him might find mercy at his hands, and the benefit of the law of the land, a security for life, so they would but recant, and turn from the works of the devil to receive the absolution of the Church. But if, still blinded by their obstinate heresy, they refused to do this, then he willed his auditory to witness their deaths, and to sing praises to God around the burning pile that should consume their bodies, for the sake of truth. He encouraged all men to give what assistance they could in the destruction of these people, and, by the authority of his most mighty Holiness of Rome, promised forty days' indulgence to any who should bear a fagot to help feed the fire, recommending parents to make even their little children do the same, to procure the blessings of heaven upon their youthful heads. Thornton then wound up his discourse with a peroration, in which he introduced a compliment to the Pope, to the Queen and Council, to Bonner, Harpsfield, himself, and to all those pious, zealous, charitable, and exemplary persons who laboured to compel men to come into the true church; and concluded with a prayer, that these labours might be so abundant in their fruits, that the day should shortly arrive when every heretic in existence should be given to the flames, in the like manner with those children of heresy who were now about to suffer for their unpardonable sins.

Thornton having concluded this unchristian sermon, so perfectly in character with those generally preached before the burning of any noted heretic of the time, now descended from the pulpit, and Owen Wilford prepared to make an answer to the Suffragan Bishop's discourse; but he and Harpsfield, perceiving such to be his intention, instantly followed the example that had been set them by Doctor Smith and Doctor Marshall, who joined together, and stopped the mouth of Ridley, bishop of London, even with their hands, when he would have replied to the merciless sermons which they preached to him in the church of St. Mary, before his execution at Oxford.

Having thus rudely and violently silenced Wilford, Thornton said to him, "If you will recant, I will give up the pulpit to you, and you shall discourse as long as you list; but if you will not, you must go hence to suffer the reward of your deserts."

"Then," cried Wilford, in a voice full of energy, "I give up my cause to Almighty God; and if nothing else is left me, I can die fearlessly as a witness to His truth."

"But you shall not silence me, Thornton," exclaimed old Gammer Plaise; "for I will tell you here, in the face of all men, that you and your fellows in blood are but as the priests of Nebuchadnezzar, who commanded the people to fall down, and to worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. And we, whom ye cast into the burning fiery furnace, as they did those servants of the true God, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, we shall pass through the flame, and not a hair of our head shall perish, in the sight of the Lord; for we shall behold, in the midst of those raging fires, a spirit walking, even the Spirit of Peace, and he shall sustain us, and shew us to be, in the sight of heaven and of earth, the worshippers of the only true God of Israel."

"Silence that raving woman!" cried Harpsfield. "Away with them all to the stake. Let not heretics brawl in the temple of the true Church."

"Bear them instantly to the stake," said Thornton. "The flame shall quench the fury of that woman's tongue."

All the officers present now prepared to lead the sufferers forward to the place of execution. Sir John Baker headed the procession as deputy of the Sheriff of the county, and a lighted torch was placed in the hand of Thornton for him to set fire to the pile. When the sufferers arrived without the church, Owen Wilford turned to Rose, and said to her, "My child, leave me here—your brother will go on with me: you had better not proceed to witness my death. Spare yourself that pain, and give me your prayers."

"I must, I will go forward," replied Rose. "Oh, my father! there is something that I have yet to do for you, though it is a dreadful office. I dare not speak it till the last moment, for your sake."

"Well, do your own will," said Owen. "But, gracious God! see how they are dragging forward your poor mother; she cannot support herself; see, she lets fall the taper that is in her hand!"

"She has caught a sight of the stake," cried Edward Wilford; "no wonder she cannot support the horror of such a preparation. Oh, my father! how gladly would I perish at that fatal spot in your stead."

"God's will be done!" said Owen. "It is better as it is. Lead on! I wish it over."

It was now with considerable difficulty that the guard and officers attending the execution made way through the throng to lead the Protestant and his fellow-sufferers to the fatal

stake. The streets, the market-place were thronged by thousands of all ages, sexes, and degrees; the very windows were alive with moving heads; the tops of houses, walls and even chimneys, were crowded with people; and one deep, heartfelt, and general exclamation of sympathy burst from a thousand tongues, as Owen Wilford stood before the accursed stake.

This was succeeded by another burst of universal feeling, when the wretched Alice, unable to support the scene before her, ended her penance by falling down senseless within a few yards of the stake. The Mayor was near her, and, without asking permission of any present, he took upon himself to order some of his people to carry the woman into his own house, which stood immediately facing the place of execution, directing that every necessary attention should be paid to restore her to animation. The mob greeted this act of mercy, on the part of the Mayor, by a loud cheer; and strangely indeed did sounds of rejoicing, though from a generous motive, mingle themselves at this moment with the terrific preparations of death. Thornton and Harpsfield, seeing the temper of the populace, judged it best not to interrupt the Mayor in doing this act of mercy; though it might be that each nourished in his mind a feeling of resentment towards the civil officer of their city, for what they deemed a scandalous indulgence to a criminal. They now proceeded to surround the fatal spot with the strong guard which they had brought with them, for their own security as well as that of the prisoners.

"Rose," said Wilford to his daughter, "follow your poor mother, and comfort her."

"No," replied Rose: "she will be cared for, since she is in the hands of men, not of monsters, as you are. My part is not yet done with you, my father."

Owen here once more attempted to address the people, but Thornton and Harpsfield were positive in allowing no discourse of his to meet the ears of the crowd, and they bade both Owen and his companions to make themselves ready. "When the bell of yonder tower tolls," said Thornton, "the fire must be kindled, and that will be in less than twenty minutes; so you know your time. Call forward the smith who is to bind them to the stake!"

The smith approached, dragging after him a ponderous chain of iron, that was to be passed about the middle of the unfortunate sufferers at the stake. Owen and his fellow martyrs now proceeded to take off their upper garments; and

though Owen was not allowed to address the multitude, yet his countenance full of majesty, the perfect composure of his manner from a deep sense of the august part he had to sustain, in dying as a witness to the truth of God's Word, impressed every heart with an agony of sympathy; whilst the high tone of feeling in which Gammer Plaise continued to recite passages from the Psalms, together with the stern and unbending demeanour of old Abel Allen, and the weeping innocence of pretty Tommy, so acted on the minds of all men present, that, but for the strong guard of halberts, glaives, and bills, they would have torn the prisoners from their tormentors, and have given them instant liberty.

A few individuals, besides the priests, chief officers, and Edward and Rose, still stood within the ring formed by the guard about the stake, and happy were any of them if they could but obtain the least token of remembrance from the hand of Owen Wilford. To one he gave a fair handkerchief, to another a ring, and amongst the rest he distributed a few small coins that he had about him; even a raze or two of ginger that chanced to be in the pocket of his gown were considered as legacies of inestimable value. To his son Edward he gave his Bible, from his bosom, with these remarkable words: "I give you, my son, all that I have on earth to bequeath to you; but that is the inheritance of life."

Owen now turned to Rose, clasped her in his arms, and as if nature in the father's heart could never find enough of that last embrace, he continued to press her in his bosom for some minutes in silent agony. The multitude, who witnessed the venerable form of Owen Wilford thus clasping the delicate figure of Rose, were so melted by the sight, that nothing but sobs, groans, and exclamations of pity could be heard around. Owen at length removed her arms gently from his neck, and drawing out his dial from his pocket, he said, "Rose, my child, be this for thee; for what have I to do with time, seeing that, with me, this day eternity begins!"

Rose kissed his hand, together with the dial which he gave her, and placed it under her cloak; then looking affectionately up in his face, she said in a firm voice, "I will learn of you, my father, so to use time, that I, too, may purchase with it eternity;—then, by God's mercy, we may meet again."

"Amen! to that, my beloved daughter," replied Owen. "Be kind to your mother;—Edward, you will now become as a husband, a father, a brother, to those dear and helpless beings I must leave for ever."

"I will, my father!" said Edward Wilford; "and so may God deal with me, as I fulfil your dying hopes."

"God bless you both, my children!" cried Owen.

"Are you ready, Master Wilford?" said an officer standing near; "the time draws on."

"Stay a moment," exclaimed Rose, and turning to the officer, she added, "good friend, give place to me and to my brother, only for a moment—give place to us, we would speak to my father. If you are yourself a father, feel for our parent, and let his children come to him."

"I am indeed a father," replied the officer. "In heaven's name, draw nigh; I will walk apart; I will not interrupt you."

"Edward," said Rose, addressing her brother with an expression of countenance that defies all attempts at description,—"Edward, put your hands under my cloak, for I have but one hand I can use, and cannot do it readily; untie my girdle, and take from it the bags you will find hanging there under my cloak; be quick."

Edward obeyed, for he instantly guessed her purpose.

"Great God!" said Rose, as he produced the bags, "to think that a child should thus offer to a father, as the kindest act she can do for him, this horrid, but sudden, means of death!"

"What are you about to do, Rose?" inquired Wilford.

"It is gunpowder!" she continued, in the most agitated manner; "hang the largest bag about your neck, and it will as speedily release you from your torments, as the like did Latimer at Oxford. But, oh! to think that I—that I should be the bearer of it to a father!"

"You have shewn by such an act the constancy and the firmness of your mind," replied Owen. "Be comforted, my child; I receive it as a merciful intervention of Providence to shorten my torments. Have you some for my fellow-sufferers?"

"Yes, there is a bag for each," said Rose; "they hang at my girdle."

"Give them quickly, Edward," said Owen to his son, "or you may be interrupted."

"No," said Rose, "do not fear that. The Mayor consented that they might be used, as the prisoners were under his control; but no one dared to incur the vengeance of Harpsfield and Thornton, by becoming the bearer of them."

"Make ready; forward to the stake," was the word now

given and received. Owen was first led on, after one last solemn farewell to his children. When he reached the fatal spot, Edward and Rose threw themselves upon their knees before him, and fervently prayed God to support their parent in death, and to receive his soul to mercy. Gammer Plaise now led on her grandson with an air of triumph. She raised her arm, and beckoning Abel Allen to follow her, she said to him, "Remember, brother Abel, the last words of Latimer to Ridley, I speak the same now to you, 'Be of good comfort brother, and play the man; for we by our deaths shall this day light up such a candle in England, as, with God's grace, shall never be put out.' Merciful God! into Thy hands I commend my spirit! forgive the sins of my life, and take this poor innocent child to thy bosom." She clasped Tommy in her arms, and gave him a kiss of such warm affection, that it seemed as if her aged lips would never part from his.

"The time expires," said the officer; "the bell is about to sound."

"Granny," cried Tommy, as he stood next to her at the stake, "I am not frightened now; I feel my heart much lighter ever since I came out of prison. I am sure God will take us. Where is Master Wilford? and where is Abel Allen?"

"I am by your side, child," said Owen; "may God receive us all this day into Paradise!"

"And may He take from the land," cried old Abel, "the curse of this cruel Queen, though I forgive her my death, as I hope God will forgive me!"

"The time is spent," said the officer. "Smith, make an end of your business. You have driven in that staple fast enough; the chain will not break. Hark! the bell is about to sound."

"Do you hear that, Thornton?" said Gammer Plaise; and turning to the smith, who was passing the chain about her body, she added, "Ay, drive it in hard and firm, fellow; for the flesh will cry out—it will resist, though the spirit never quails."

"The bell sounds indeed," said Harpsfield, as the deep peal, that told the solemn note for the dying, fell upon the ear of every one present with a chill and harrowing effect. Harpsfield and Thornton were alone unmoved. "That bell," said the latter, "tolls to the tune of the queen's justice. Oh! sweet Mary, how melodiously dost thou sound in my ears!"

"Thornton!" cried Gammer Plaise, "do you hear that bell?"

"Woman I do hear it," answered the Suffragan of Dover; "in another minute your time is gone."

"And yours too, Thornton," said Gammer Plaise; "in another minute you must obey my summons, for the day and the hour of my burning are both come. They stand before you like the hand-writing on the wall, that summoned the wicked Belshazzar from his impious feast to the tribunal of God. Remember your own guilt, and tremble."

"I will hear no more of this," cried Thornton; "give me the brand, I will fire the fagots myself." He advanced to do so, with the utmost fury, although his cheek was livid, and every nerve in the body of the strong bad man shook with the terror of his mind. He raised the torch, he uttered horrid imprecations on the heretic who, even at the stake itself, could thus agonise his conscience, when suddenly he staggered, and fell backwards on the ground.

Gammer Plaise saw him fall, and exclaimed aloud, "God has heard me, His judgment is upon thee. Repent, if thou hast sense enough left for repentance. The arrow of death is in thy heart."

Harpsfield instantly ran to the assistance of Thornton, as did Friar John, and many others who stood near. They raised him from the ground, and tore open the upper part of his dress, so as to give relief to his throat. He still breathed, but was senseless. His eyes were closed, and his hand convulsively yet grasped the lighted torch; it could only be wrested from him by force. Friar John now ordered him to be removed from the spot; and leaving the conduct of the execution to the care of Harpsfield, set forward to attend the dying bishop.

This circumstance occasioned a short delay in the execution. But Harpsfield, whose whole soul was a compound of bigotry, cruelty, and malice, eagerly prepared to fire the pile without farther delay. When Rose saw him advancing to do so, she screamed fearfully, and starting up from the ground where she had been kneeling, exclaimed, "Wretched man! would you murder the innocent? But you are a villain, accursed in the sight of Heaven."

Harpsfield turned to look upon her, and said with a malicious smile, "Nay then, if you are so insolent, you shall fire the pile yourself. Take the torch, and do as I command you, or I will commit you to prison, and the next burning shall be your own. You are not the first woman who has been made to set fire to her father's stake."

"Monster!" cried Rose, "you shall tear me piecemeal before I would do it."

Edward Wilford felt so incensed at this act of hardened insult and cruelty on the part of Harpsfield towards his sister, that he raised his arm to knock him down upon the spot. An officer who stood near saw his purpose, and prevented it, but in the scuffle the torch fell and was extinguished; another flaming brand was speedily procured, and once more the Archdeacon was preparing to fire the pile.

The condemned Protestants saw what he was about to do. They all lifted up their hands together and cried with a loud voice, "Lord have mercy upon us!" and so they continued to cry and to beat their breasts, and to call upon the name of God.

Harpsfield now deliberately walked up to the pile of fagots. He was in the act of stooping down to kindle into a blaze the dry straw and brushwood that lay beneath them, when he was induced for a moment to raise his head by a loud and tumultuous burst from the populace, as the crowd were in motion and making way for two persons mounted on horseback, who rode towards the place of execution with the utmost speed.

The foremost rider was Sir Richard Southwell. He dashed on into the very centre of the market-place within a few yards of the stake, reined up his gallant steed, and snatching the cap off his head, waved it to and fro in the air, as he cried aloud in a voice of exultation, "God save Queen Elizabeth!"

The cry was taken up by the multitude; for in a moment all men understood that Mary was dead, and that the High-sheriff for Kent had now hastened to proclaim her successor; and "God save Queen Elizabeth!" was shouted, echoed, and shouted again and again, by a thousand and a thousand tongues.

Sir Richard Southwell leaped from his horse, passed within the line of halberts, and tearing asunder, with the help of his sword, the staple that confined the chain to the stake, he again exclaimed aloud, "I give liberty to these people in the name of our new Queen, in the name of Elizabeth!" The scene that followed baffles all description; so sudden, so exhilarating, nay almost so maddening, was the transition from the deepest agonies of grief to the transports of perfect joy. The multitude hailed, greeted, cheered Sir Richard Southwell as an angel sent from heaven to deliver His faithful servants. The rescued Protestants fell on their knees, whilst tears burst from their eyes, as they poured forth their souls in thanksgiving to

God for their deliverance; and next they turned to Southwell, as their earthly deliverer, clinging to him by the cloak, sobbing, embracing, and shaking him by the hand, forgetful of all personal distinction in the remembrance of the act of mercy he had so lately shewn to them.

Harpsfield and his party alone looked displeased; and the former asked Sir Richard Southwell by what authority he took place of him in an affair that belonged to the Church?

"You ought not now to ask me that question," said Sir Richard, "since your authority is no more. Cardinal Pole, your master, died but a few hours after Queen Mary. She expired the day before yesterday, being the 17th instant: and not half an hour since, I received my warrant from the Council to proclaim Elizabeth her successor, with directions to displace all the authorities acting under the Commission of the late Queen and Cardinal against heresy."

"Then I suppose I am turned out too," said Sir John Baker, who had hastened to the side of Southwell in order to learn a full account of this sudden news, "for I belonged to the Commission against heretics; but I always entertained a great respect for the Princess Elizabeth, and I am glad, right glad, she has come to the crown; and so I doff my cap, and say with all my heart, God save Queen Elizabeth!"

Again the multitude joined the cry, and once more the name of Elizabeth made the old walls of Canterbury ring with reiterated greetings.

Rose and Edward Wilford, during this sudden deliverance of their father, had stood almost stupified with the surprise of a joy so great, so overpowering. They now sufficiently recovered themselves to be capable of returning thanks to God, and of embracing their parent on his safety.

Whilst they did so, one among the crowd had observed that Harpsfield had not joined in the greeting of the proclamation of the new Queen, and a proposal was made to fall upon him for this offence. The Mayor saw that a general tumult, if not a riot, would follow, and begged Harpsfield to take shelter in his house, which, as we before stated, stood facing the place of execution. The Archdeacon slunk into it, and the Mayor now also invited the rescued Protestants there to repose themselves, and to endeavour to recover their composure after the astonishing vicissitudes of the day.

Owen Wilford, leaning on the arm of Rose, immediately passed in. Sir Richard Southwell promised that he would follow as soon as he should have read aloud the Royal pro-

clamation. Edward Wilford was about to join his father, when Lawyer Cluny, who had been in attendance on this day's ceremony of the purposed execution of the Protestants, fearing what might be the consequence to himself and his associates, if Edward Wilford remained at liberty at so critical a juncture, resolved to make a desperate effort to throw upon him a public odium, to secure his person, and convey him at once to prison. In order to accomplish this, he now cried aloud that it was his business, as a faithful servant of the State, to secure a traitor; and instantly producing a writ of the Star Chamber, to warrant the arrest of the man he had so denounced, Cluny, followed by some of the officers, surrounded Edward Wilford, and secured him by main force.

Gammer Plaise saw his danger, and assisted by old Abel Allen, she now called vehemently upon the multitude, as well as upon Sir Richard Southwell, not to suffer a subject of Queen Elizabeth to be detained under a warrant issued by the council of bloody Queen Mary. Sir Richard, who, before this appeal was made to him, had formed a resolution in what manner he would act to save Edward Wilford from the malice of his enemies, instantly resisted the execution of the warrant, and forbade that the prisoner should be conveyed to the castle, saying he would inquire into his conduct, and take the charge of him himself.

On hearing this, the halberts immediately drew back, and the crowd, no longer in fear of the guard, determined to take their revenge upon the attorney. The various events of the morning, the previous feelings of detestation that had been inspired by the cruelty of the Papists, added to the excitement of popular clamour, so that the multitude were ripe for mischief, to wreak it on the first object of offence that came within their way. Falling, therefore, with fury upon the lawyer, they dragged the miserable Cluny to a pump in the market-place, swearing that they would make him eat the writ before they ducked him under the pump.

The mob shouted, the boys hooted, dogs barked, and even the women pelted Cluny during his perilous dragging to the pump, whilst Gammer Plaise and Abel Allen kept alive the spirit of the multitude in setting before them the sins and evil practices of the lawyer. Sir Richard Southwell vainly attempted to restore order, which could not have been done unless he had commanded the halberts to attack the people. However, he so far succeeded in his endeavours, that he saved Cluny from having the writ crammed down his throat. It

was torn and trampled in the mud, and the delinquent got off with having his clothes nearly torn from his back, and a good ducking under the pump.

As Abel Allen was returning in triumph, accompanied by Gammer Plaise and little Tommy, who still kept close to his granny's side, with the intent to join his old master and Edward Wilford at the house of the Mayor, a dog that had taken a most active part in worrying the attorney, and in tearing his clothes, now came to old Abel's feet, and there let drop from his mouth (according to his thievish custom) the spoils of victory.

"That's Pincher," said Tommy; "I know his whine or his growl from any other dog in Canterbury."

"It is Pincher, indeed!" cried old Abel; "and I know the wag of his tail half a mile off. My own Pincher, my dear Pincher, how glad I am to see you once again! And what have you dropped at my feet, my fine fellow?—again, I see, thieving Pincher. Will you never learn to be an honest dog, and to behave yourself like a gentleman? But, mayhap, it is a spoil from the attorney, and if it be so, it's no thieving at all, seeing that the old proverb goes, set a thief to catch a thief, and from what better than thieving comes the goods of Lawyer Cluny? And so you have brought me a paper, Pincher; but I have not got my barnicles with me, so I can't see to read a word of it. Here, blind Tommy, you are younger than I am and your legs can run faster than mine, boy. Do you mind now; run straight on, follow your nose, and catch hold of the tail of the first person's cloak you come near, for that person is Sir Richard Southwell: he is going straight to the Mayor's house, give him this paper, mayhap it may be of consequence to some one."

Tommy immediately obeyed these directions, and plucking Sir Richard by the cloak, he said, "Sir, I say, Sir Richard, if you are Sir Richard, be pleased to take this paper that old Abel Allen's dog has brought to his master's feet."

Sir Richard Southwell, (whose mind was intent upon his daughter, and who, now that he had saved Owen Wilford from a dreadful fate, was most anxious to get back to Wellminster, in order to attend her sick-bed), scarcely heeding what the blind boy said to him, nevertheless took the paper, opened it, and casually ran his eye over the contents; but no sooner had a few words fixed his attention than he stopped, and without moving from the spot where he stood, read the contents to the end. Southwell then exclaimed, "Holy

Mary! how wonderful are the ways of heaven! How have I been deceived!"—and calling to the officer, who had the command of the halberts, still waiting the orders of Sir Richard or the Mayor, Southwell drew him aside, and spoke a few words in an earnest manner. The officer bowed, and turning to his men, immediately gave the word for the halberts to follow him. They left the market-place without delay.

Sir Richard now entered the Mayor's house, at the very moment old Abel Allen, Tommy, and his Granny, were about going in there also, in compliance with the invitation of that worthy civic officer, who had desired that the poor people should refresh themselves at his house, and endeavour to recover their composure after the fearful events of the morning. They were all ushered into a large chamber, where the humane Mayor of Canterbury, who most truly rejoiced that the unhappy Protestants had been rescued from so horrid a fate, was kindly endeavouring to soothe the agitated feelings of poor Alice, (now recovered from her swoon), as her husband, her son, and daughter, stood affectionately around, giving her the assurance which her confused senses could scarcely credit, that they were really alive and free; that Mary Queen of England was no more, and Elizabeth reigned in her stead; so that the known principles of Elizabeth, in favour of the Reformed church, gave the hope of perfect security for all of that persuasion.

Sir John Baker was also present; but Harpsfield (who, be it remembered, had taken shelter in the Mayor's house to escape the fury of the populace) was not in this chamber. His hatred of all Protestants, and in particular, of Owen Wilford and his daughter, who had both so boldly withstood, whilst they experienced, the exercise of his tyranny, made him now detest the very sight of them, since he could no longer inflict upon either the tortures he deemed due to heretics. Boiling with savage rage and disappointed fury, his bosom tortured him with the same indignant feelings he had formerly inflicted upon others, and unable to bend his spirit to the times, he was now pondering in his own mind, on the readiest means to effect his escape into Spain, where he was sure his talents and disposition would make him a welcome adjunct to the power of the Inquisition. Certain it is, he possessed learning; for some works, said to be the production of his pen, are still in existence; but Fuller, in his Church History, has done ample justice to the character of Nicholas Harpsfield, by classing him in the same page with Bonner, as one amongst the most cruel men of his time.

Whilst Harpsfield sat alone in an obscure ante-room in the Mayor's house, Sir John Baker, as we before noticed, remained in the apartment with the rejoicing Protestants; and by this time, Sir Richard Southwell had also joined them, accompanied by Abel Allen, Tommy, and Gammer Plaise. Sir Richard now talked apart to Sir John Baker, and concluded with these words in an audible voice: "I doubt not, you would desire to see justice done to the subjects of Queen Elizabeth; I must therefore now beg of you to act with me in bringing forward some notorious delinquents, whom I have this day detected in practices of the most infamous nature. I have sent an officer and a body of men to arrest them; they will be brought here anon; and I trust you will support me in doing an acceptable service to our new Queen, by examining and punishing these villains as they deserve."

This was just such a service as Sir John Baker most earnestly desired should be required of him, since, above all things, he was now most eager to be in favour with, and to get into place under, the new sovereign and government. Sir John was, in fact, one of those wise and happy-tempered men who love nothing so much as their own interest, and who have so completely the rule over their own principles and feelings that they can, without any twinge of conscience, be equally conformable under all governments, and at all times.

Sir John had been one of the first in the reign of Henry the Eighth to take the oath acknowledging the supremacy of that king, an assumption of authority that formed the first step towards the downfal of Popery in this kingdom. And not many years after, the complaisant Sir John had been alike acquiescent in subscribing the Six Articles, so likely to re-establish that very power which Henry had taken such bold steps to overturn. When Edward the Sixth mounted the throne, Sir John's compliant temper never forsook him, for he then became a joyful follower of the Reformation, the newly established Church, and laws in its support. On the death of that young king, when the prudent Sir John learned that by his last will, Edward had bequeathed the crown to the Lady Jane Gray, the worthy magistrate posted off for London, expressly for the purpose of presenting himself before the Lady Jane, to congratulate her upon her accession to the crown. But when he arrived in London, and there found that the Lady Jane's short-lived rule was no more, and that Mary was proclaimed in her stead, he, like a loyal and dutiful subject, turned his steps another way, posting forward to congratulate

Queen Mary. But his zeal for the Reformed church during the time of King Edward, procured for him a frown from the swarthy brows of his new mistress, and Sir John was at first a little disconcerted. But the ingenious and complying never need despair; so that the worthy Knight soon completely regained all his lost favour, by the extraordinary zeal with which he joined, as a cooperator, her Majesty's inquisitors in routing out, and bringing forward the unlucky Protestants, who were playing at hide-and-seek about Canterbury. These exertions at length procured for him a nomination under the special commission as above stated. But Mary was now dead, and Elizabeth proclaimed queen; so that all things were certain once more to take a change. And who now rejoiced more for her accession to the crown than did Sir John Baker? Who felt more kindly hearted to the rescued Protestants than this humane and worshipful Justice of the Peace? And he who, in Queen Mary's time, would have kissed the Pope's toe, or that of his Holiness's puppy dog at her command,—now that Elizabeth ruled, would have hanged the Pope, and his bulls, and his priests, all in one string, to pleasure the new Queen!

Sir John expressed his hearty desire to concur with Sir Richard Southwell to do justice to any of the subjects of the blessed and righteous Princess who had ascended the throne; and whilst these professions were streaming in a full torrent from his lips, the door opened, as Friar John, Sir Francis Morgan, Samuel Collins, and Lawyer Cluny entered the room under the strong guard that had been dispatched to arrest them. Cluny was dripping from the plentiful fountain of the pump, the few clothes he had left upon his back hanging tattered and bespattered with mud. Friar John was a bold villain; for now, instead of suing for mercy, he asked in the most haughty manner, for what cause Sir Richard Southwell had ordered him to be torn from the death-bed of Thornton, even at the very moment the Suffragan Bishop had breathed his last?

"Is Thornton dead?" inquired Sir Richard.

"He is dead," said Friar John; "and that infamous woman who stands there," (pointing with his hand to Gammer Plaise), "I have no doubt, by her diabolical arts, procured his death. She has been often suspected of witchcraft; and her shameful threats to Thornton, on the day of her condemnation, he confessed in his last moments had preyed upon his mind. There can be no doubt, therefore, that this circumstance, aided by

her arts, hastened his death. She stands accused by me of murder."

"And I stand," replied Gammer Plaise, "acquitted in the sight of God of so wicked a charge. I did not slay Thornton; but I will tell you what did slay him,—the worm that never dies—his own conscience. I called up his sins before him; I denounced the wrath of heaven upon the wicked; I struck the arrow of God's word into his heart, and death struck his own arrow without my aid. This is the cause, and no other, why Thornton gave up the ghost so fearfully."

"But you shall not escape," said the Friar; "for I will be your accuser, and Thornton shall be avenged."

"Your accusation will now be of little moment," said Sir Richard Southwell, "since it has pleased Providence to bring your guilt to light in a manner the most extraordinary, and by the humblest means. This poor blind child has put into my hands a paper that will convict you all."

"That was Pincher's doings, your honour," said Tommy, "and not mine. And I dare say Pincher got the paper when he tore Master Cluny's gown and doublet off his back, for everybody knows Pincher is a great thief."

"But as honest a dog for all that," cried old Abel, "as ever took a rogue by the skirts; and I'll warrant me that this is the best day's work he ever did in his life, if it turns out to shew how wicked men's deeds against innocent people can be confounded, even by a poor dumb thing."

"You speak the truth indeed, old man," said Sir Richard, "since this paper promises a large reward from Sir Francis Morgan to this wretched attorney, on condition that he should procure the means of convicting Edward Wilford in a supposed conspiracy against the State,—a conspiracy, as it here appears, solely planned and pretended to be discovered by Friar John, in order to destroy sundry innocent persons, many of whom, I lament to say it, have already suffered the torture under his accusation. Here, also, is an injunction given by Sir Francis Morgan to Thomas Cluny, that he should procure, on another malicious charge, a writ of detainer from the Star Chamber, to hold Edward Wilford still as a prisoner, in the event of his acquittal from the first ground of offence. The name of Samuel Collins also appears as a witness to this disgraceful transaction—a thing that involves him as a party concerned in the crime. Sir John Baker! I must instantly leave you, as I declare—and in doing so, I publish my own shame—that I was prevailed upon by

this artful Friar to give up to him the management, the care of my dear child, in order to induce her to become the wife of that villain, Sir Francis Morgan. I was told that Arabella would desert her duty, and leave her father's roof, to abscond to a foreign land in company with Edward Wilford, and on this account I dealt harshly with the dearest thing I hold on earth."

"Sir Richard," said Edward Wilford, "I told you candidly that I considered Arabella as bound to me by her own free affections, and by that contract which she had given me by her own consent; but I pledge you my word that whatever I designed to do beyond this, I purposed it should be honourably and openly. Your daughter would never have forgotten the affection which she owes to you."

"I believe it, young man," replied Sir Richard: "but this wretch made me his dupe. For, under a pretext of acting for the preservation of her peace, by preventing her becoming the wife of a herctic, Friar John has so exercised his dark purposes against my child, that (how can I speak it and live!) he has driven her, I fear, to distraction. Such is the issue of his cruelty. I must return to her, for I can no longer bear this uncertainty concerning her danger. Suspense is the worst of all sufferings. Sir John Baker, what remains to be done I leave to you. You will commit these men to prison. If they can bring forward anything to palliate their offences, they must do it in a court of justice."

Sir Richard Southwell now prepared to leave the room, and Edward Wilford implored so earnestly to be allowed to accompany him, that his request was at length granted, and the more readily, as Alice, Owen, and Rose, also expressed their desire to follow their benefactor, in the hope to afford him such service and comfort as might be within their power, in this most anxious time of trial. They departed, therefore, without awaiting the result of Sir John Baker's examination of the prisoners.

Friar John preserved the haughty and resolute insolence of his character. He would not stoop to answer the least interrogatory, but stood silent and sullen, looking with an air of ineffable contempt upon the Justice. Sir Francis Morgan, who had much of the spaniel in his disposition, now attempted to soften the magistrate by a fawning and cringing address, calculated to render him propitious to some apology Sir Francis seemed desirous to make to him.

But little did Morgan know the character of the zealous

representative of justice before whom he now stood. Sir John Baker cut him as short as he would slice up a pancake upon his dish. "Don't talk to me, fellow!" exclaimed the worthy magistrate; "what do you take me for, I trow? Do you think that I will hear your palavering, when, the Lord help us! it has come to light that you, and that proud rascal of a friar there, have been plotting together against one of the most faithful, loyal, and zealous subjects, that our blessed queen Elizabeth has in all these realms? Never join against the queen's friends, as my right reverend friend Bonner—no, I mean my right reverend friend Cranmer used to say; for, as for Bonner, he will now be sent to the Tower, no doubt, as the bloody rogue deserves! so hold your tongue, Sir Francis Morgan, or I will have you gagged; and learn to know, that, as a justice of the peace, I do nothing but for peace and justice, without favour or affection to any man; though, if I were inclined to favour, it would be to see rewarded such a young man as Edward Wilford, who, we all know, swore to Wyatt, that if Mary, or any one, did but attempt to injure a hair of the Lady Elizabeth's head, he would spend the last drop of his blood in her defence. Our royal dame will make a knight of him for that, I warrant, whenever he goes to Court."

Whilst the eloquent Justice had blustered out this speech, as fast as he could between puffing and blowing to take breath, Lawyer Cluny managed to slip up to the table, and bowing very civilly to Sir John Baker, said, "Sir John, as a loyal subject to the new Queen, I am sure your worship will be glad of the opportunity of laying before her Majesty some particulars that nearly touch herself. Promise me security for my life, and I will bring forward proofs to shew her those who are her greatest enemies, and who joined with Gardiner, in Queen Mary's time, to get that warrant for her death, which was only not executed in consequence of the brave resistance to it made by the Lieutenant of the Tower."

"What, fellow! what's that you say?" cried Sir John; "that will be nuts indeed to be cracked by the Privy Council, and no bad thing for the Justice that carries up the news either. I 'll promise you life; I 'll get you saved, if you turn Crown evidence. And I 'll do more than that for you, if I can. You sha'n't lose your place as my clerk neither; for you have been a bustling fellow, Cluny, that I will say for you, and know the law about parish paupers, and binding 'prentices, as well as any clerk in the county of Kent. So, let s hear all you have to say."

"Wretch!" exclaimed Friar John, as he looked indignantly on Cluny; "speak another word, and not all the powers upon earth shall save you from destruction."

"Make that Spanish rascal hold his tongue, Catchpole Miller," cried Sir John Baker.—"Cluny, speak on; I'll be warrant for your safety."

"I can state all in one sentence," replied Cluny; "send some of your halberts with me to my lodgings, and I will bring you written documents to prove, that it was in concert with Friar John that Gardiner planned the scheme to obtain that warrant from certain members of the Queen's Council, in order to procure the death of Elizabeth."

"Then, if this work is to go on," said Samuel Collins, who had hitherto stood quite chop-fallen in a corner of the room, "why, curse me, if I don't peach too; for, look you, I say, and I swear, that Sir Francis Morgan made me sign that paper against my will. I 'll swear that he held his sword to my throat while I did it. And if Friar John helped Bishop Gardiner to procure that warrant for the Princess Elizabeth's death, I can tell you who carried it down to the Tower to hasten the Lieutenant to execute it; for that man was no other than Sir Francis Morgan, and I was with him; and I 'll swear to all I heard him say, to get the Lieutenant to chop off her Grace's head, with no more remorse than if it had been a lark's for the spit.—So, set me down, if you please, Sir John, as a Crown evidence, as well as Master Attorney."

"That I will, my honest fellow," cried the Justice.—"Oh! what a horrible business is this! to think to cut off our blessed Lady Elizabeth's head, like that of a lark's for the spit! And if she had lost her head, all the world would have said she was a good woman; but certainly, she would never have lived to be reckoned a gracious Queen. What a discovery is here! how are her enemies brought to light!—Here, Catchpole Miller, stop that fellow's mouth—don't let Morgan speak. To think of cutting off such a head! I scarcely know if my own stands upon my shoulders at the hearing of it.—Have them both to Canterbury Castle. This is a Crown matter, I must see to it; and, do you hear, throw the Friar and Morgan into separate dungeons,—iron them well, for they are great rogues; and to-morrow I will myself post up to Court, to congratulate our blessed Queen on her accession, and to get an order to have these villains sent up to the Tower.—To cut off a Princess's head! what a discovery! Oh, you monstrous monsters, you cruel villains, where will your heads be for this?"

Sir John instantly despatched both Friar John and Morgan to prison. The zealous Justice then busied himself in preparations for his journey to London, to wait upon the new Queen. He so far succeeded in his purpose, as to obtain an order to see the prisoners, Friar John and Sir Francis Morgan, removed to the Tower. Jenkyns, their accomplice, had been taken, and joined with Cluny and Collins as evidence against them. It was clearly proved that the pretended conspiracy against the life of Queen Mary, as well as the discovery of it, had been entirely a plot of their own, in order to destroy Edward Wilford and many other persons obnoxious to the Friar, some of whom, as we before stated, had been put to the torture on account of his false accusations.

John and Morgan were condemned to suffer death; and it is with great pleasure we can record that the first warrant for the execution of judgment signed by our glorious Queen Elizabeth, was one to do an act of perfect justice. Every circumstance of the former misdeeds of these criminals was also industriously laid before her by Sir John Baker; and she generously declared, that though she could forgive Friar John and Morgan the part they took with Gardiner to bring about her own destruction, yet she never would pardon their design against Edward Wilford's life, and especially as they had caused so many of her good and innocent subjects to be put to the rack; since it was by guarding the lives, as well as the laws of her people, that she wished to rule in their hearts.

All this was very gratifying to Sir John Baker, who now thought his bulky vessel was fairly set to catch the full breeze of Court favour; but he was disappointed; no preferment fell to his lot, nor was he invited to return again to Court. After long doubts and hesitation, Sir John at last ventured to open his mind on the subject of his disappointment to an old courtier, who smiled, nodded, winked, and looked mysterious, according to the usual preface of a courtly confidential communication; when, with an air that was to seem consolatory to Sir John's feelings, but really intended to mortify them, the sage communicator whispered in his ear, that all the fault lay in himself; for when he had waited upon Elizabeth, his breath savoured so strong of canary and old sack, that it had given much offence to the royal nose; which, as was universally known, was remarkably nice in its olfactory nerves, and could never pardon any ill odour of any kind or description.

We have told this part of our story somewhat out of place, wishing at once to be rid of the rogues to whom it relates;

and we shall only add, that Lawyer Cluny was afterwards struck off the roll as an attorney, for some disgraceful practices, and that he died a beggar in the Sanctuary of St. Martin-le-Grand. Collins, we believe, was hanged, but cannot positively affirm it as a fact.

We must now return from this digression to speak of the other personages connected with our narrative, resuming it at that time when Sir John Baker busied himself in bringing to justice those notorious offenders whom he afterwards helped to the block.

Gammer Plaise, Abel Allen, and Tommy, quitted the Mayor's house at Canterbury, and set forward to Wellminster Hall; for each of them felt desirous to learn the condition of Mistress Arabella, who was much beloved by the neighbouring poor; and old Abel was never so happy as when near his master, Owen Wilford. Pincher, once more restored to this honest serving-man, now followed close at his heels.

We shall not here dwell upon the scene which awaited Sir Richard when he returned to the Hall. Mistress Deborah met him in the chamber adjoining that of his daughter; she shook her head mournfully, and said, she feared there was no hope, for her young lady remained quite in a senseless state, and she apprehended death would speedily ensue. Sir Richard instantly sent again to command the presence of Doctor Argentine of Canterbury, and rushing into the chamber of his beloved daughter, was followed there by Owen Wilford and his family, who deeply sympathised in the present affliction of their generous deliverer.

When they looked upon Arabella, who lay extended like a corpse, their hearts were melted with sorrow at the sight of one so young, so good and beautiful, now sinking into an early grave, by the cruel machinations of a villain. Edward Wilford's grief was of that deep, silent nature which defies all worldly consolation. But who shall speak the agonies of the father—the self-accused Sir Richard Southwell? He went to the bed, as Rose and Deborah raised his unhappy child, and chafed her hands and temples; he knelt down, kissed her lips, her cheeks, and hands, calling upon God to restore her, or to take her father with her to the tomb. He begged his child to live, as if she had been sensible of his distress, or could have relieved it; called upon her to look up in his face, and then accused himself as her murderer. He now started away from the bed, as if he could not bear the sight of the object of his anxiety, and again hung over her in all the agony of lingering hope,

placing his hand upon her heart to feel if it still beat, and then a feather on her lips to watch the least motion of her breath; straining his eyes in fixed attention, and not daring to move, scarcely to breathe, lest the least sign that might give hope should escape him.

Whilst Sir Richard Southwell knelt thus, and watched by the bed of his senseless child, Gammer Plaise, who had learned her condition, softly stole into the room, and speaking in a low but distinct voice, she said to the wretched father, "Rise, Sir Richard; rise, and leave this vain care. You can do her no good, for you are but a man, and have not the power as Elisha, the man of God, had, to restore the dead or the dying, by breathing upon cold and senseless lips the breath of life. Let me do my part."

"What can you do to save my child?" cried Sir Richard.

"Nothing but what God wills," replied the venerable woman: "but whilst I use such means as my simple skill may dictate, do you, and all of you, retire, and pray to God to bless those means; for, unless He blesses the cup, the medicine shall profit nothing;—and do not let me be disturbed by that Doctor Argentine you have sent for. He will give his feed attendance, like the follower of a coffin, to see the last rites done decently, but without benefit to the body he attends. Leave me with this fading flower; and who knows but God may make me his instrument of succour, even as he shewed the well of water to Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, when she had laid her child down to die? All the earth failed her; but the Lord took him up, and the child was saved. So may it be with your child. And now let all quit the room but Rose Wilford."

There was an energy of character, of expression, about old Gammer Plaise, that generally prevailed, and especially in moments of trial. Sir Richard Southwell caught every word which fell from her lips, as drowning men catch at the least branch within their reach, in the hope to rescue them from death. He thought, he believed, she might be sent as an instrument in the hand of heaven to restore to him his beloved daughter. Owen saw the state of his mind, and kindly interfering, led both the distracted father and his own afflicted son from the chamber, after they had each affectionately imprinted a warm kiss on the cold hand of Arabella, and retiring into an adjoining chamber, fervently besought Almighty Providence to give a blessing to the means about to be used for the restoration of the sufferer.

Sir Richard, in these moments of bitter distress, forgot that his friend differed from him in faith,—forgot that he was a heretic; and falling on his kness, he joined Owen most heartily in the prayer the good pastor offered up for his child to the throne of Mercy; so completely does a deep sense of misery suppress the rancour of bigoted and obstinate opinions, in a mind capable of true feeling.

This ended, Sir Richard awaited the issue of his daughter's dangerous condition in a state of agonised suspense no tongue could describe.

That night the family of Wilford remained at the Hall, where indeed they continued till it pleased Heaven to grant their heart's desire, by restoring Arabella once more to their hopes. In a few days, by the skill and attention of Gammer Plaise, she so far recovered as to be able to sit up in a chair in the little anteroom, where, with many cautions not to say a word to agitate her feelings, the Gammer allowed an interview between Sir Richard and his daughter.

Arabella tenderly took his hand, and, with tears in her eyes, thanked him for again restoring her to his affections, his care, as a child. One thing, she said, preyed on her spirits, and that was, if she had died, her father, in one point would have been deceived. He would never have known that the merciless persecution of the Protestants, the cruelty of Harpsfield and Thornton, with the tyranny of Friar John, had at first caused her to doubt the truth of that Church which could shelter such men under the sanction of religion, and which could consider human victims as an acceptable sacrifice to the Almighty. She then stated the circumstance of the books bequeathed to her by her late mother; and concluded with saying, "I am now, my dear father, convinced of the truth of that faith which my mother acknowledged to be hers in her dying hour, and in support of whose truth so many have become witnesses even to death."

Sir Richard Southwell was greatly shocked at hearing this declaration from his daughter; he seemed about to reply; but Gammer Plaise, who was present, looked steadfastly at him, and then glanced her eye upon his child. He understood her meaning, and said nothing, but embraced Arabella, as the tears fell from his eyes; and finding she had really become of the same faith with Edward Wilford on her own conviction, and not by his means, some months after, Sir Richard ceased to oppose their union, though his daughter's abjuration of the Church of Rome was a circumstance that sunk deep into his

heart, embittered the remainder of his days, and, we fear, hastened his progress to the tomb. He lived, however, to see his child happy in the choice of her affections, and died sincerely lamented, as well by the Protestants as the Roman Catholics; so much can the conduct of a really beneficent mind impress with honour and esteem even those who in opinion entirely differ from it.

A few days after the recovery of Arabella, Owen Wilford, his beloved wife Alice, Rose, and Edward, returned to the village of Wellminster, where Gammer Plaise and Abel Allen had gone on before to see all things prepared to receive them in their old house once more,—for Wilford was again appointed to fill his favourite Cure. As the good man advanced up the little green lane that led into the village street, all his old parishioners came out to meet him. Tears of joy, warm congratulations, and blessings invoked upon his head, spoke the honest and hearty greetings of his simple flock. They followed him in a crowd to the church, where the first act he did amongst them, was to ascend his pulpit, and, having returned public thanks to God for the great deliverance vouchsafed to him and his fellows in affliction, he gave them a sermon suited to the occasion; and then, before he dismissed his congregation, with all simplicity and kindness, the good man invited them to follow him to his house, there to partake of the worldly blessings still spared him, and to rejoice their hearts in innocent mirth; seeing, as he said, that it was a custom, even in the times of the patriarchs, to sing and give praises, and to make glad the heart of man, in grateful acknowledgement for the mercies of God.

The congregation eagerly followed their pastor from the church; and plentiful that day was the good cheer of Old English roast-beef and pudding freely distributed to all. But what tongue can speak the joy of old Abel Allen, when he found, during the short time Friar John held the cure, he had been so little at the parsonage house, that the butt of ale, brewed by Abel's own hands, had escaped being tapped, to wash the Friar's throat, as he expressed it. It was this day set a-broach, and fairly emptied before the conclusion of the festivities. Even Pincher shared the general joy, by having a good slice of beef bestowed upon him from the hand of his master, whose heels he closely followed throughout the day.

During the feast, two persons were missing, Gammer Plaise and little Tommy; and Rose, who loved them both, goodnaturedly ran to the cottage of the former, to bid her come to

the dinner. She found the poor old woman sitting under the shade of a venerable yew-tree, that grew at the end of her little garden, reading aloud the Bible to blind Tommy, who sat attentively listening by her side, having put down near him, upon the bench where they sat, a cage containing his favourite linnet.

"Tommy," said Rose, "why don't you make your Granny come to our feast? The roast-beef is on the table, and the plumb-puddings too; and all the village is rejoicing for my dear father's return; and the first cup of ale after dinner from Abel Allen's store, is to be quaffed to the health of Queen Elizabeth. Do come and join us, for everybody is rejoicing on account of my father."

"I do rejoice for your father's return, dear Mistress Rose," replied the old Gammer, "for he is a good man; but I rejoice with the Lord, in my soul and in my spirit. As for worldly mirth, what have the infirm and the blind to do with that? This, too, is a day when mirth neither suits with me nor mine. It is the anniversary of my son's death, or rather, let me say, of his birth; since he was on this day born to God in heaven. The wicked priests of Baal burned this child's father on this very day two years past in Smithfield;—there was no Queen Elizabeth then to save him."

"I did not know it was so," said Rose—"I mean, I did not remember the day; I am sure, if I had, I would not——But do keep up your spirits, Gammer Plaise; for we must all submit to God's will, and we will all of us be kind to you and Tommy."

"I know you will," replied the poor woman, "and I do bow down—in silence I bow down before the will of God: but to hear the song of mirth, to see glad faces and gay minds, when the staff of my old age has been torn from my hand; when my hopes are withered, and my heart nearly broken: this, dear young lady, is what I can never witness more;—it would strike on my soul, like ill-timed music on a nice ear, with jarring discord. The boy may go with you, if he lists; for he is young, and troubles ought not to wither young hearts as they do old ones."

"No," said Tommy; "I could not go, Granny; I will not leave you alone, but stay and comfort you.—And indeed, Mistress Rose, I could not be merry upon the day the wicked people burnt my poor father in Smithfield. I was listening to my linnet when Granny called to me, to tell me what day it was; and I put down the bird when I heard it, for then

it made no music to me; and I sat down and cried, for I have no father."

"Yes, you have a father, boy," said Gammer Plaise, "and I have a son,—for God is both to us."

"Then, don't cry so, as you do sometimes, Granny," replied Tommy; "for, whenever you cry, it makes me do so too. And I will love—and do all I can for you; so pray be comforted. And Sir Richard Southwell says that he will buy all the baskets I make for his household, and he has promised to give me a new cage too for my linnet, if I am a good boy."

Rose bade a kind farewell to these simple and afflicted inmates of the cottage; and though they did not personally attend the feast, old Abel took care that a portion of it should be sent to them; for, on this occasion, Abel acted as chief-steward and almoner, as well as butler, to the village flock assembled on the green lawn before the pastor's door. And as the old parish-clerk was lately dead, Wilford promoted Abel Allen to fill that office: a thing, for which Abel considered himself particularly well qualified, having as good a voice, he declared, to sing psalms and repeat the responses, as any man in the parish, to say nothing of his gifts of reading and writing.

Owen Wilford, Alice, Edward, and Rose, on this day, partook with genuine kindness in the universal joy that was exhibited in every face to greet the return of the Protestant to his flock; and often was the name of Sir Richard Southwell gratefully repeated this day, by those who, under Providence, were indebted to his active and timely interference, for the preservation of their pastor's life. Sir Richard's health and that of his daughter was drunk with enthusiasm; and after dinner, when Abel proceeded to tap the noble and particular butt of ale of his own brewing, he first filled out a family silver cup, and respectfully presented it to his master.

Owen Wilford held the cup extended in his hand, and ere it reached his lips, he looked at his assembled guests, and said, "God bless Queen Elizabeth! and may England for ever preserve that liberty gained for Englishmen by the Reformation of the Church!"

"Amen!" said old Abel Allen, in a most sonorous voice, by way of hanseling his new office of Parish Clerk of Wellminster.

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